

Larkspur General Plan 1990–2010

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Larkspur General Plan 1990–2010

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Chapter 1. Introduction

This is the 1990 Larkspur General Plan. It supersedes the 1972 General Plan and any and all elements of the general plan subsequently adopted, except for the Housing Element which was adopted by the City in October 1988 and which was revised and re-adopted in November 1990 to be consistent with this General Plan.

The Larkspur General Plan is a comprehensive, integrated, and internally consistent statement of Larkspur's development policies for the city and its Sphere of Influence,¹ also referred to as the Planning Area. (For maps of the Planning Area, see Figure 1-1, page 2, and Figure 4-1, page 56.) All Planning Area lands outside of the City limits of the City of Larkspur are regulated by the County's General Plan and the County's zoning designations. However, State law permits the City to plan for areas outside of its immediate jurisdiction, if those areas have a direct relationship to the City's planning needs. Larkspur has chosen to make its General Plan coterminous with its Sphere of Influence, and to work with the County to assure that County land use decisions within the Larkspur Sphere of Influence are compatible with this General Plan.

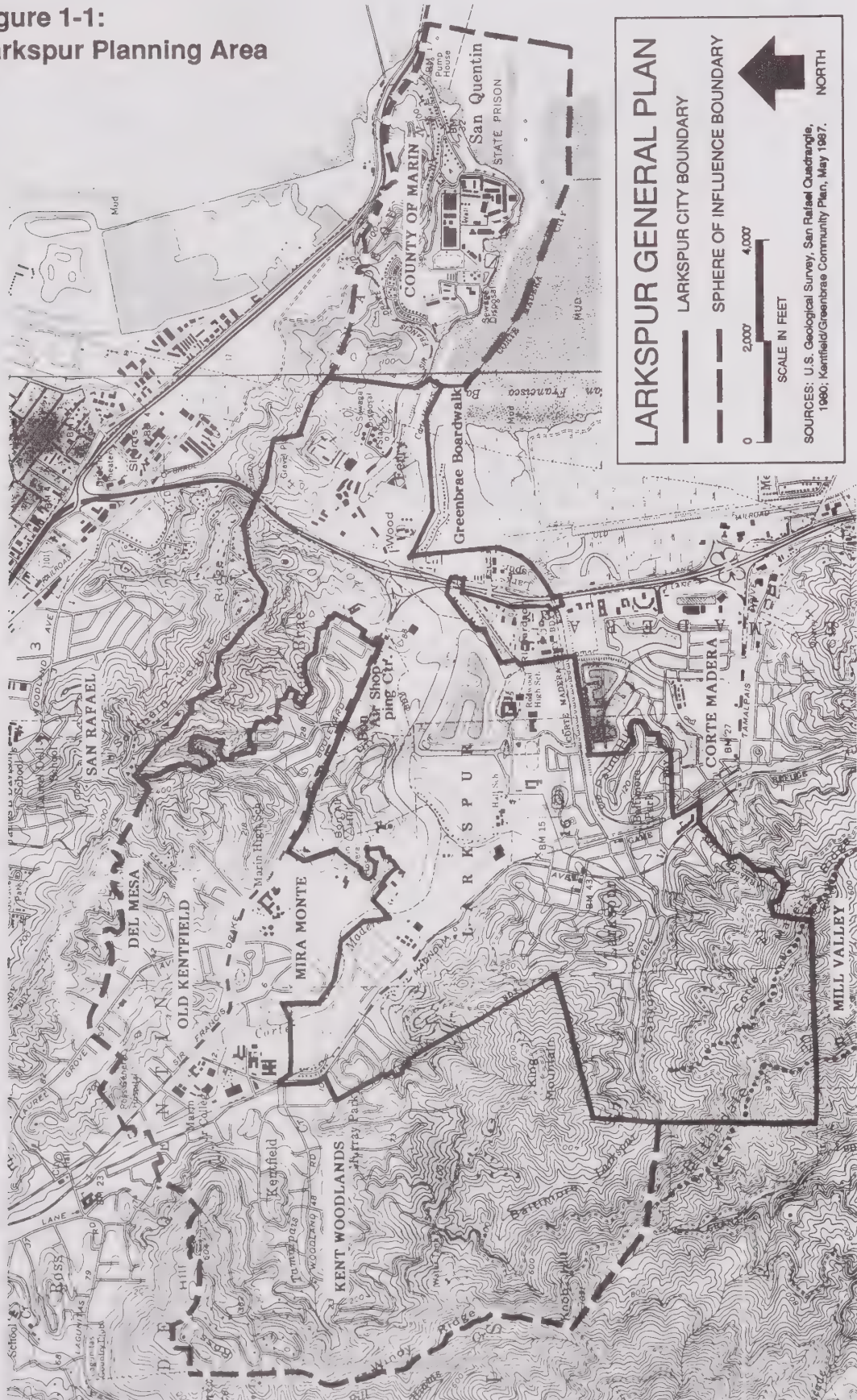
WHAT IS THE GENERAL PLAN?

The General Plan responds to, and its authority derives from, the California Government Code, Section 65302. It is the principal policy document for guiding future conservation and development of the city. It represents an agreement among the citizens of Larkspur on basic community values, ideals, and aspirations to govern a shared environment. The Plan has a long-term horizon, addressing a 20-year time frame. Yet it brings a deliberate, overall direction to the day-to-day decisions of the City Council, its commissions, and City staff. The Plan—

- Organizes the desires of Larkspur residents in regard to the physical, social, economic, and environmental character of the city;
- Defines a realistic vision of what the city intends to be in 20 years;
- Charts the course of conservation and development that will determine the future character of Larkspur and the nature of its environment; and

¹ "Sphere of Influence": The probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a city or district as approved by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) of the County.

Figure 1-1:
Larkspur Planning Area



- Serves as a collective community memory of issues raised and directions chosen during the process that updated the Plan.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN

The Plan is made up of a text, diagrams, and other illustrations. The text is arranged in chapters.

Starting with Chapter 2, each chapter begins with a description of existing conditions or a discussion of problems or both. Desired future conditions are stated in the form of *Goals, Policies, and Programs* which are the essence of the Plan.

Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goals are long-range in nature; policies and programs are intermediate or short-range. *Goal, policy, and program* are defined below, printed with the numbering system and typeface used in Chapters 2 through 8.

Goal 1: **A general, overall, and ultimate purpose, aim, or end toward which the City will direct effort.**

Policy a: A specific statement of principle or of guiding actions which implies clear commitment but is not mandatory.² A general direction that the City elects to follow, in order to meet its goals.

Action Program [1]: *An action, activity, or strategy carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve a specific goal.*

In summary, goals determine *what* should be done, and *where*. Policies and programs establish *who* will carry out the goals, *how*, and *when*. Together they will determine the nature of the environment and the future character of Larkspur. Explanatory language that immediately precedes or follows a policy or program has the same force or obligation as the policy or program it explains.

The reader is directed to the specific goals, policies, and programs in each chapter. For convenience, the major themes of the Plan are grouped and paraphrased, below.

² The word "shall" makes mandatory those policies in which it appears.

Chapter 2, Land Use

- Preserve and enhance Larkspur's unique physical and natural setting, while accommodating suitable new development. Maintain the city's overall residential character and the scale of its neighborhoods. At the same time, encourage a diverse demographic (especially age and family and social) mix.
- Enhance the attractiveness and viability of existing commercial areas. Ensure that they provide neighborhood-serving businesses and are accessible by means other than the auto. Preserve the historical character of Downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods. Establish a town center or civic nucleus.
- Maintain the present mix of uses in the area east of Highway 101, especially the mobile homes affordable to seniors and to young families.

Chapter 3, Community Character

- Preserve, enhance, and strengthen Larkspur's livable and attractive environment, its community identity, and its special "sense of place." Promote a greater awareness of and sensitivity toward Larkspur's historic and archaeological heritage.

Chapter 4, Circulation

- Provide safe and efficient transportation facilities for moving people and goods within Larkspur. At the same time, give *quality of life* and *protection of the environment* a higher priority than "traffic mobility," and do everything possible to ameliorate the negative impacts of local and regional traffic on Larkspur.
- Assure adequate transit service in Larkspur (bus, ferry, airport limousine) as alternatives to the auto.
- Improve the connections between the several parts of Larkspur and with neighboring communities, as well as access from Larkspur to the freeway.

Chapter 5, Community Facilities and Services

- Provide park facilities and recreation programs for all age groups.

- Cooperate with the several school districts to share resources and provide a high level of cultural, recreational, and community use of public buildings and lands. Preserve all existing school sites for future public use, giving school use the highest priority. Renovate and expand public buildings and facilities to meet growing demands for services over the next 20 years.
- Ensure the availability of quality child care in Larkspur.

Chapter 6, Environmental Resources

- Preserve and enhance open space features, including marshes and wetlands along San Francisco Bay and Corte Madera Creek, wildlife habitats, view corridors, and ridgelines. Maintain the Corte Madera and Southern Heights Ridges as open space and as community separators between Larkspur and Mill Valley and between Larkspur and San Rafael.
- Protect open space and shoreline/marsh conservation areas from any degradation that could result from public facility improvements such as roads, paths, sewers, or flood control projects.
- Reduce water consumption.
- Reduce the total volume of the city's waste stream.

Chapter 7, Community Health and Safety

- Do what the City can, within reason, to protect the community from injury, loss of life, and property damage resulting from natural disasters and hazardous conditions. Increase public awareness of flooding, seismic, landslide, fire, and other natural hazards, and of methods to avoid or mitigate their effects. Deter development in areas prone to such hazards.
- Protect Larkspur from accidental exposure to hazardous materials from spills, leaks, vapor releases, and improper or illegal storage and disposal.
- Reduce the adverse effects of noise upon persons living or working in Larkspur, especially the escalation of sound levels in areas where noise sensitive uses exist.

Chapter 8, Trails and Paths

- Make it easier to move around Larkspur without having to use a car. Provide safe, paved, bicycle and pedestrian paths to schools, shopping areas, recreation facilities, and open space preserves. Improve traffic safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

State law requires cities to prepare general plans covering at least seven subjects—land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, noise, and safety. Figure 1-2 at the end of this chapter shows the relationship of the Larkspur General Plan chapters to the issues that State law requires to be addressed.

Maps and Diagrams

Accompanying this text as an integral part of the General Plan is the official Land Use and Circulation map. The map is provided at two different scales: one inch to 400 feet and one inch to 800 feet, on a 1989 base map. Maximum allowable population densities and building intensities are presented in Chapter 2, Land Use, pages 17–21, for each category shown on the Land Use and Circulation map.

What is Adopted

The Land Use and Circulation and the noise contour maps are adopted. Also adopted, and shown on separate maps as part of Chapter 8, Trails and Paths, is the city-wide system of existing and proposed trails, paths, and bikeways. All other maps and graphic illustrations and their captions, unless otherwise specified in the related text and their titles, are illustrative or provide basic information, and are not adopted as statements of policy. Appendixes A, B, and C are informational only, and are not adopted as statements of policy.

GLOSSARY

Chapter 9 is a glossary of terms. It is provided to assist the reader in understanding the Plan and to ensure that the terms used in the Plan are clearly defined to establish intent and to prevent misinterpretation. The glossary will be compared to the definitions in the City's zoning ordinance so that any conflicts may be promptly remedied at the time of Plan adoption, or soon thereafter.

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

A separate Technical Appendix contains background material used in the preparation of the General Plan, such as the Final Environmental Impact Report; three background reports on *Land Use, Public Facilities and Infrastructure*, and *Circulation*; and a description of Larkspur's neighborhoods. The background reports provided the Citizens Advisory Committee with a foundation for formulating and recommending Goals, Policies, and Programs to the Planning Commission. The Technical Appendix, while important to a thorough understanding of the General Plan process, is not adopted as policy by the City, nor is it essential to the day-to-day use and implementation of the Plan. Anyone wishing to review the Technical Appendix may do so at the Planning Department in City Hall.

THE GENERAL PLAN PROCESS

In 1988, the City decided to consolidate and update its General Plan to provide public decision-makers and private developers with clearer and more effective policy guidance. The two-year planning process to prepare the Plan began in January 1989 and culminated in the adoption of a new plan late in December 1990. Highlights of that process include:

- *Appointment by the City Council of a Citizens Advisory Committee of 65 persons with a variety of talents and interests and representing all of Larkspur's neighborhoods as well as many business interests.* The Committee met six times between February and June 1989 and regularly during the public hearing process.
- *Consultant preparation of detailed background reports on Land Use, Public Facilities and Infrastructure, and Circulation.* The reports (which can be found in the Technical Appendix) describe existing conditions and potential planning opportunities, and were used by the Citizens Advisory Committee to help formulate the General Plan's Goals, Policies, and Programs.
- *Eighteen public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council.*

The result of this effort is a new General Plan built upon the ideas of Larkspur's citizens—a guide in text and maps to opportunities and conditions for new development based on an optimal balance among the social, environmental, and economic needs of (and costs to) the community.

ADMINISTERING THE GENERAL PLAN

Once adopted, the General Plan does not remain static. State law permits up to four General Plan amendments per mandatory element per year (Government Code §65358[b]). Most amendments propose a change in the land use designation of a particular property. As time goes on, the City may determine that it is also necessary to revise portions of the text to reflect changing circumstances or philosophy.

State law provides direction on how cities can maintain the plan as a contemporary policy guide: It requires each planning department to report annually to the City Council on “the status of the plan and progress in its implementation” (§65400 [b]). In addition, the City should comprehensively review the Plan every five years to determine whether or not it is still in step with community values and conditions.

AMENDING THE PLAN

Any citizen wishing to amend the General Plan would follow the procedure generally outlined below. (More detailed information on processing and timing is available from the Planning Department.)

1. Prior to filing an official application for a General Plan amendment, the prospective applicant or his or her agent should discuss the proposed amendment with the City’s Planning Director. This gives the applicant a first-hand opportunity to find out the details of the amendment process as well as any concerns the City may have about the proposed changes.
2. Should the applicant decide to proceed with an amendment, the next step is to file an official application with the Planning Department and pay the required processing fees.

All applications requesting a change in land use designation must be accompanied by a development plan of sufficient detail to ascertain the potential impacts of the proposed project on the site and the surrounding area. What constitutes sufficient detail is determined by the Planning Director on a case-by-case basis.

Environmental review in accordance with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) will be required of every General Plan amendment.

3. Once an application is submitted, it will be placed on an agenda for public hearing before the City Planning Commission according to the schedule established by the Planning Commission for General Plan amendments. Prior to the Planning Commission hearing, the City, in accordance with State Government Code, will provide notice to the public of the hearing date and the item to be discussed. For an individual amendment, this typically involves a legal notice in the *The Twin Cities Times* or the *Marin Independent Journal* or both, and a notice mailed to all property owners within 300 feet of the subject property. (Major amendments affecting the entire community, such as this update of the Plan, are noticed differently because of their scale and impact. In such cases, State law provides alternative methods of notification that do not require notice to be mailed to individual property owners.)

4. Planning Department staff will prepare a report to the Planning Commission for the public hearing, describing in detail the proposed amendment, any environmental or other impacts that may result, and comments from other City departments or affected governmental agencies. The staff also will state whether the Commission should recommend the amendment to the City Council for approval or denial. The staff report is sent to the Commission and the applicant. The staff report, comments from the applicant, and other public testimony become factors in the Commission's action.

State law requires that any decision on a General Plan amendment must be supported by findings of fact. These findings are the rationale for making a decision either to approve or deny a project. At least the following standard findings should be made for each General Plan amendment:

1. The proposed amendment is deemed to be in the public interest.
2. The proposed General Plan amendment is consistent and compatible with the rest of the General Plan and any implementation programs that may be affected.
3. The potential impacts of the proposed amendment have been assessed and have been determined not to be detrimental to the public health, safety, or welfare.
4. The proposed amendment has been processed in accordance with the applicable provisions of the California Government Code and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

City-initiated amendments, as well as amendments requested by other public agencies, are subject to the same basic process and requirements described above to insure consistency and compatibility with the Plan. This includes appropriate environmental review, public notice, and public hearings leading to an official action by Council resolution. □

Fig. 1-2: Relation of General Plan Chapters to State-Mandated Elements

<u>MANDATED ELEMENTS</u>	GENERAL PLAN	
	Chapter	Pages
LAND USE ELEMENT		
Distribution of Housing, Business, Industry and Open Space	2	14–16
Population Density/Building Intensity	2	17–21
Land Use Map		Pocket
Distribution of Recreation Facilities, Educational Facilities, and Public Buildings	5	93–95, 102–106
Flood Areas	7	125–127
Implementation	2	28–42
CIRCULATION ELEMENT		
Description of Existing System	4	57–67
Map of Existing System	4	59
Description of Proposed System	4	73–74
Map of Proposed System	4	Pocket
Utilities	6	120–121
Implementation	4	51–92
HOUSING ELEMENT – <i>Separate Document</i>³		
Potential Housing		H49–H51
Map of Housing Sites		following page H40
Governmental Constraints		H41–H43
Non-Governmental Constraints		H39–H41
Energy Conservation		H37–H38
Quantified Objectives		H52–H53
Implementation		H1–H9
Public Participation		H55
Progress on Housing Programs		H46–H49
CONSERVATION ELEMENT		
Forests/Rivers/Wildlife/Implementation	6	111–119
Water/Implementation	6	120–121
Soils/Implementation	7	133–137
Flood Control/Implementation	7	125–129

³Draft printed October 31, 1990.

<u>MANDATED ELEMENTS</u>	GENERAL PLAN	
	Chapter	Pages
<i>OPEN SPACE ELEMENT</i>		
Description	6, 8	111–116, 153–155
Trails	8	153–157
Implementation	6, 8	116–119, 158–163
<i>SAFETY ELEMENT</i>		
Seismic Hazards/Maps/Implementation	7	129–133
Slope Instability/Maps/Implementation	7	133–137
Flooding/Implementation	7	125–129
Fire Hazard/Implementation	7	138–140
Emergency Response/Implementation	7	123–125
Hazardous Materials/Implementation	7	140–142
<i>NOISE ELEMENT</i>		
Noise Sources	7	146, 150
Noise Contours	7	146–147
Implementation	7	150–152

Chapter 2. Land Use

This chapter describes the pattern of land development in Larkspur, identifies where change may occur, and presents Goals, Policies, and Programs to guide change. It defines land use categories and explains the General Plan "Land Use and Circulation Plan" map. This chapter brings together all land use issues, limitations, and opportunities, and balances them with community needs and desires.

The General Plan is the official policy guide for government decision-makers, within and outside Larkspur, on all matters related to land use. It is also a reference for Larkspur citizens, who want to know what is planned for their city and to property owners, who want to know the potential use of their land.

THE LARKSPUR PLANNING AREA

According to State planning law, a city's general plan may cover "any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgment bears relation to its planning." By this definition, the Larkspur Planning Area encompasses the adjacent unincorporated land in its "Sphere of Influence" (SOI)—the probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of the city as determined by the Marin County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo).¹ The lands within the SOI consist of well-established, built-up communities on one side, and a state prison on the other. None of the area within the SOI is interested in annexing to Larkspur. The established communities include Kentfield, Kent Woodlands, and part of Greenbrae. They curve around Larkspur's northwestern boundaries and cover a land area about two-thirds the size of Larkspur. The state prison (San Quentin) occupies most (432) of the 450 acres that lie between Larkspur's eastern boundary and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

Kentfield, Kent Woodlands, Greenbrae, and the San Quentin Peninsula have strong social, economic, and transportation ties to Larkspur and could be covered in the Larkspur General Plan. However, Kentfield, Kent Woodlands, and Greenbrae prepared their own Community Plan (approved by the Marin County Board of Supervisors, May 1987). The Community Plan covers most of

¹ Larkspur's "urban service area" (see definition in Glossary) is not coterminous with its SOI on the west. The urban service area encompasses only those lands outside the city to which the City is committed to supplying municipal services "now or in the next 5–10 years," and includes Murray Park, west Greenbrae, and the southeast portion of the San Quentin Peninsula.

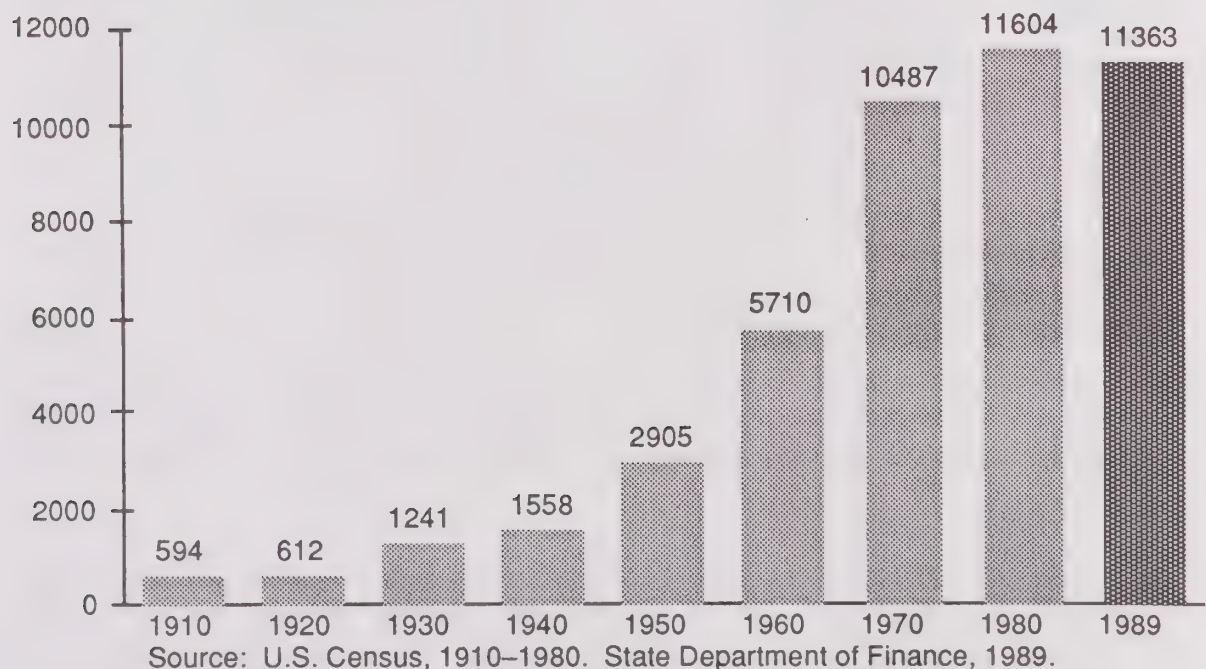
the subject areas typical of general plans. It presents clear statements of the goals and policies needed to preserve the single-family character and natural amenities of those communities. Generally, the Community Plan and the Larkspur General Plan are in harmony.

A clear statement of goals is not available for the San Quentin Peninsula. However, the State has no plans for closing San Quentin Prison or otherwise changing the use of land it owns in the area.² Nevertheless, this General Plan provides policy direction for development on the San Quentin Peninsula if the prison is ever closed or reduced in size.

LAND USE PATTERN IN LARKSPUR

Growth was gradual in Larkspur until the move to the suburbs that followed the completion of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937. Figure 2-1, below, illustrates the rapid increase in growth after 1940. Larkspur more than tripled in population between 1950 and 1970. Ninety percent of its housing was built after 1940.³

Figure 2-1
Larkspur Population, 1910–1980



Reflecting its past as a summer home retreat and its more recent role as a “bedroom community,” Larkspur is primarily residential. Thirty-eight percent of its almost 2,000 acres is devoted to single-family and multiple-family residential

² Lt. Cal White, Public Information Officer, California State Prison, San Quentin, May 1989.

³ *Larkspur Housing Element*, Table H-11, page H-21.

uses, while only 7 percent is commercial and industrial. Of the residential units, 56 percent are multi-family and 34 percent are single-family. The remaining developed land is in public use such as schools and fire stations (6 percent), City parks (3 percent), and utilities, roads, and railroad right-of-way (13 percent). As Figure 2-2 shows (next page), the distribution of land uses has remained about the same since the City began keeping track 25 years ago, except that the share of land devoted to residential use has gradually increased (from 25 to 38 percent), while undeveloped land dropped from 49 percent of the city in 1965 to 28 percent in 1989.

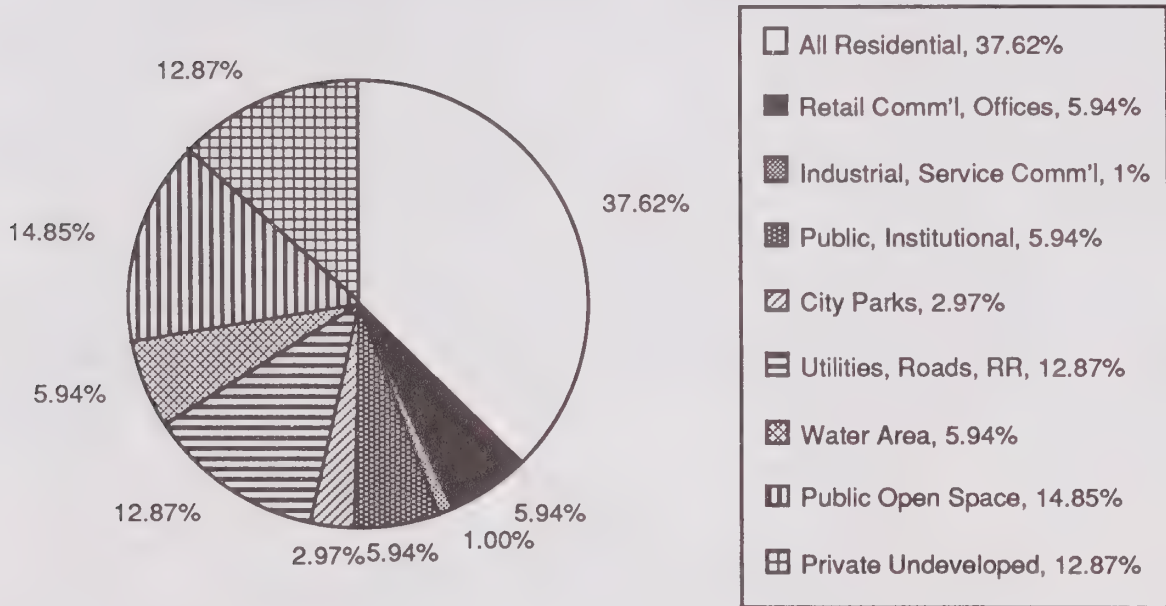
A little over half of Larkspur's undeveloped land is publicly-owned (the Northridge Open Space Preserve), and the other half is privately-owned. About 76 acres of the privately-owned land in Larkspur (Little King Mountain and saddle, and parcels on Redwood Avenue) are being acquired by the Marin County Open Space District. (As of September 1990, the property was in escrow.) Once those lands have passed into public ownership, the percentage of privately-owned undeveloped land in Larkspur will decline from 13 to 9 percent.

Figure 2-2
Existing and Approved Land Use
As a Percentage of Total City Acreage, 1965–89⁴

Land Use Category	1965	1973	1983	1989
All Residential	25	26	34	38
Retail Commercial, Offices	3	3	5	6
Industrial, Service Commercial	1	3	1	1
Public, Institutional	2	6	6	6
City Parks	1	3	2	2
Utilities, Roads, RR Right-of-Way	13	17	13	13
Water Area	7	7	6	6
<i>Subtotal, % Developed Land</i>	51	65	67	72
Public Open Space	n.a.	n.a.	15	15
Private Undeveloped	n.a.	n.a.	18	13
<i>Subtotal, % Undeveloped Land</i>	49	35	33	28
Total	100	100	100	100

⁴ Larkspur in 1989 covered 1,957 acres of land and water, seven more acres than in 1983. The total acreage figures for 1965 and 1973 are not considered reliable and are not presented here, but the percentages of land in each category are viewed as reliable. *Note that percentages of "Developed Land" in 1989 include land area for which development was approved, but not yet built.*

Figure 2-3
Existing and Approved Land Use
As a Percentage of Total City Acreage, 1989



These percentages show that Larkspur is a mature city. The amount of land available for development or redevelopment is shrinking dramatically. In 1983, there were about 203 acres of vacant or marginally-used land. Between 1983 and 1989, about 105 acres were developed or approved for development, leaving about 52 acres of vacant land and another 46 acres with redevelopment potential. (Land designated for open space acquisition is not included in the figures above.)

Another way of looking at existing development is in terms of the amount of commercial and industrial floor area Larkspur has. According to the Marin County Planning Department, Larkspur had 1,707,625 square feet of commercial and industrial floor area in 1987. The square footage is divided among six major categories of land use.

Figure 2-4
Commercial and Industrial Floor Area in Larkspur, 1987

Land Use Category	Square Feet
Industrial	266,150
General Commercial	144,000
Commercial Office	525,175
Commercial Retail	525,900
Commercial Residential (Mixed uses)	193,600
Commercial Recreational	<u>52,800</u>
Total	1,707,625

The data in Figure 2-4, above, were developed by the Marin County Planning Department from the County Assessor's files, from Planning staff surveys of land use, and through review by city planning staffs.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

All land within Larkspur can be grouped into categories, as shown on the Land Use and Circulation map provided with this report. Listed below are the land use categories that appear on the Land Use map, along with their definitions. By law, "standards of population density and building intensity" must be determined. However, in the event of a discrepancy between residential units per acre and persons per acre, the unit (not the population) density shall govern. For residential uses, the densities shown (in dwelling units and in persons per acre) are maximums which are to be allowed only to those developments that successfully promote social and economic diversity. Even then, the figures do not constitute an entitlement, nor is there is any guarantee that any individual project will be able or will be permitted to achieve the maximum densities shown. For the commercial and industrial categories, the specific uses mentioned are illustrative only.

Residential

Open Residential. This single-family residential category allows up to 0.2 units per gross acre, which translates into up to 2 people per 5 acres. Minimum lot size is 5 acres, but smaller existing parcels would not be precluded from developing one housing unit.

Very Low Density Residential. This single-family residential category allows up to 1 unit per gross acre (up to 2 people per acre). Minimum lot size is 1 acre, but smaller existing parcels would not be precluded from developing one housing unit.

Low Density. This category allows up to 5 dwellings per gross acre, which translates into approximately 10 persons per acre. One house is allowed on each lot, unless a use permit is granted for a second unit. The addition of second units could increase density up to 10 dwellings (20 persons) per gross acre. The lowest minimum lot size is 7,500 square feet on parcels that are flat or on slopes up to 10 percent. (Some lots predate zoning restrictions and do not meet these requirements, but they are legal building sites.) On slopes greater than 10 percent, minimum lot sizes increase to 43,560 square feet (one acre) where slopes are 45 percent or more. The City may require minimum lot sizes as large as 10 acres for areas with Residential Master Plan zoning. Maximum floor area ratio (FAR)⁵ for low density residential is 0.40 (lower for hillside properties with greater than 10 percent slope).

Medium Density. This category allows up to 12 dwellings per gross acre, which translates into about 24 persons per acre. Maximum density decreases with slope to a minimum of two units per gross acre for slopes greater than 45 percent. Maximum FAR for medium density residential is 0.50 (lower for properties with greater than 10 percent slope).

High Density. This category allows up to 21 units (about 42 persons) per acre on a flat site (less than 10 percent slope). Maximum density decreases with slope to a minimum of two units per gross acre for slopes greater than 45 percent. Maximum floor area ratio for high density sites is 0.60 (lower for properties with greater than 10 percent slope).

It is also the intent of this General Plan that single-family homes be allowed in medium and high density districts.

Mobile Home Park. This is a residential category that allows only mobile homes and accessory uses, up to 14 units (about 28 persons) per gross acre. Its primary purpose is to protect existing mobile home parks from being converted to other residential or non-residential use. (Recreational vehicle parks are allowed with a conditional use permit.)

⁵ See Glossary, Chapter 9, for definition of “floor area ratio.”

Commercial/Industrial

Administrative and Professional Offices. This designation provides areas for office activities which serve local and regional needs. It allows administrative, executive, medical, dental, and business offices, some service establishments, medical supply sales, and laboratories. It is intended that Administrative and Professional Office areas will be characterized by buildings of low intensity and landscaped grounds. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.35, and landscaped areas (including patios and walks) should cover at least 30 percent of the lot area.

Restricted Commercial. This designation provides for neighborhood shopping areas to meet the frequent and recurring needs of nearby residents. Customers can be expected to arrive on bicycle or on foot, as well as by car. This category allows “retail”—apparel, art galleries, florists, grocery stores, photo, sporting goods, shoes, and the like; “personal services” (e.g., laundry and dry cleaners, shoe repair); bars and restaurants⁶; and finance, insurance, real estate, administrative, executive, and business offices, and the like. Second-story housing is encouraged. Buildings are low intensity (maximum two stories) and have a maximum floor area ratio of 0.4.

Commercial. This designation provides for neighborhood shopping needs and the broader goods and service needs of residents of Larkspur and adjoining communities. It is characterized by businesses that rely on customers making trips by car, and those uses which do not necessarily benefit from the high-volume pedestrian concentrations found in shopping centers and Downtown. These include auto accessory stores, carpet stores, catering establishments, department stores, and the like, as well as uses allowed in *Restricted Commercial* areas. Second-story housing is encouraged. Buildings are comparable in scale to those in the Restricted Commercial category and have a maximum floor area ratio of 0.4.

Downtown. This designation applies to Larkspur's Downtown. It allows most of the same uses as those allowed in the Commercial designation, but with the goal of promoting personal services and retail sales of convenience goods while enhancing the vitality and character of the historic commercial area. All uses are to be compatible with the present mix of small-scale restaurants, drug stores, retail shops, book stores, and art galleries. Second-story housing is encouraged. The present two-story scale of buildings is to be maintained, and off-street parking is required for new development. Floor area ratio should not exceed 1.0.

⁶ Bars will be allowed only with a conditional use permit.

Industrial and Service Commercial. This designation provides for a wide variety of commercial, wholesale, service, and processing uses which are of value to the community at large. It allows warehousing, heavy commercial, auto sales and repair, food and drink processing, construction yards, print shops, and similar uses. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.4.

Public and Government

Schools. This designation applies to public schools and their grounds. Floor area ratios should not exceed 0.25.

Public Facilities. This designation applies to federal, State, County, special district, and publicly-owned City facilities, not including schools and colleges. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.25.

Open Space

Parkland. This designation applies to active and passive parks, and linear parks (landscaped paths) in urban areas. The only structures allowed are shelters, restrooms, storage sheds, and other structures needed to accommodate public use or provide for maintenance of the land. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.10.

Open Space Area. This designation applies to any parcel of land or water which is essentially unimproved and is devoted to the preservation of natural resources, views, and wildlife habitats, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation and education, or public health and safety. It may include publicly-owned lands as well as privately-owned lands set aside as open space through conditions of development approval. The only structures allowed are shelters, restrooms, storage sheds, and other structures needed to accommodate public use or provide for maintenance of the land. The floor area ratio should not exceed 0.10.

Shoreline/Marsh Conservation Area. This designation applies to lands containing tidal marshes, seasonal marshes, beaches, rocky shorelines, mudflats, wetlands, low-lying grasslands overlying historic marshlands, streams, and riparian vegetation. It may include publicly-owned lands as well as privately-owned lands set aside as open space through conditions of development approval. Land uses which provide or protect wetland or wildlife habitat, and/or which do not require diking, filling, or dredging, are encouraged. Other uses which do not require diking, filling, or dredging but are less protective of habitat value may be permitted when it can be proven that the

resulting public benefit exceeds environmental costs and liabilities. Public benefits shall include but not be limited to: public access, recreational, educational, or scientific opportunities, provision of essential water conveyance, transportation or utility services, and protection from flood or other natural hazards.⁷ The only structures allowed are shelters, restrooms, storage sheds, and other structures needed to accommodate public use or provide for maintenance of the land. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.10.

Educational/Environmental Resources Area. This designation applies only to the College of Marin campus in Larkspur. It allows outdoor athletic and recreational programs and activities; landscape management and horticultural educational, environmental science, and nature study, and floodplain and wildlife habitat. No additional structures are allowed on the land, except for classrooms, consistent with State law which gives community college districts independence from local zoning where their educational programs are involved.

Water Area. This designation applies to the channels of Corte Madera and Larkspur Creeks, the lagoon within the Greenbrae Marina development, and San Francisco Bay.

LARKSPUR'S RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS

Single-Family

Each of Larkspur's single-family neighborhoods has a distinct character which derives from its period of development or natural setting. Detailed descriptions of each neighborhood can be found in Appendix B.

Multiple-Family

More than half of the housing in Larkspur is in multiple-family developments. In 1989, the State Department of Finance estimated that 56 percent of Larkspur's housing was multiple-family versus 35 percent that was single-family. This ratio is unusual for suburban communities, where the percentages normally are reversed. Larkspur is second only to Sausalito in the percentage of housing that is multiple-family, and it has been City policy to preclude increases in the percentage. Multiple-family neighborhoods are also described in Appendix B.

⁷ This definition was borrowed from Marin County, which allowed low- and moderate-income housing as a public benefit. However, housing is not appropriate for areas with this designation in Larkspur.

DESCRIPTIONS OF COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS

Downtown

Downtown Larkspur is the historic center of the community. It is a pedestrian-oriented commercial strip—one lot deep on both sides of Magnolia Avenue, between William Avenue and Doherty Drive—that serves the immediate retail and service needs of the surrounding neighborhoods, but also provides services to Larkspur as a whole. The City's historic City Hall sits on a small rise near the south end, and a relatively new shopping center anchors the other end. Across from City Hall is St. Patrick's Church and School. Other significant landmarks are the Blue Rock Inn and the Lark Theater.

The area is designated as "Downtown" on the Land Use map. It is covered by an Historic Preservation District Overlay zone which requires Heritage Preservation Board review of zoning changes and building, demolition, and grading permits. The Historic District was officially recognized by the State of California in 1981 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. Its buildings, shops, and streets have been kept small-scale, pedestrian-oriented, and compatible with the area's historic character.

Niven Nursery

Just around the corner from Downtown, on Doherty Drive, is the 18-acre Niven Nursery property. A retail nursery occupies the northeastern corner of the property, and a wholesale flower nursery (in existence since 1921) occupies the greenhouses to the west and south. The entire site has been zoned Light Industrial in recognition of the City's desire to foster the continued operation of the existing nursery, and Larkspur's historic consultant has stated that the nursery has potential for landmark designation based on its industrial use. However, to prepare for potential future redevelopment, this General Plan designates the site low density residential.

North Magnolia

The North Magnolia area is about four-fifths of a mile northwest of Downtown. Like Downtown, it is a long narrow strip only one lot deep on both sides of Magnolia Avenue, between Murray Avenue and the northwestern city limits. The area is characterized by small shops, some with on-site parking, which serve the retail and service needs of the neighborhood and, to some extent, the Lower Ross Valley. The area is newer and therefore more auto-oriented than Downtown—easier to drive to and harder to walk between stores. The

establishments are small, and it remains the City's intent that most parking will be provided on-site. The west side is designated Commercial, and the east side is designated Restricted Commercial.

Medical Office Area

Marin General Hospital, the largest hospital in Marin County, lies just outside the Larkspur City Limits on Bon Air Road. The presence of the hospital has had a significant influence on land use along Bon Air Road and South Eliseo Drive, where medical and dental offices with some 175 doctors and 25 dentists serve central Marin. While offices are the primary use in the area, which is designated with the Administrative and Professional Office land use category, related retail and personal service uses and small convalescent hospitals also are allowed.

Sohner Plaza, at the northwest corner of Bon Air Road and Magnolia Avenue, also houses medical and administrative offices and related retail and personal services that benefit central Marin. Across Bon Air Road is a small Commercial area. The buildings, which formerly housed a Safeway supermarket and a Pizza Hut, were vacant as of 1990.

PLANNED DEVELOPMENTS

Bon Air

Bon Air Shopping Center and Drake's Landing Office Center are the major commercial components of the 70-acre Bon Air Master Plan development on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. The shopping center—which was expanded by 80,000 square feet to 166,000 square feet in 1987—is anchored by a Petrini's grocery store and supported by specialty retail businesses, small offices, and banks. The office center (122,000 square feet) is also new. The Bon Air Master Plan also accommodates 42 new town houses and 129 new single-family houses.

A small Commercial area, with a mix of offices and retail uses, lies just west of the Bon Air Shopping Center on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

San Quentin Peninsula

The western end of the San Quentin Peninsula is another master-planned area. Within its 150 acres (east of the NWPRR right-of-way) are the Wood Island Office Complex, Larkspur Landing shopping center, several new office buildings, a hotel, three City parks, and the Lincoln Village apartments. The shopping center contains a supermarket, restaurants, and stores that provide

retail goods and office and food services to central Marin as well as the entire Bay Area. One of the office buildings is built around the historic Remillard Brick Kiln, which is protected by Historic Zoning. Surrounded by the quarried hillsides behind the Larkspur Landing shopping center are 348 apartments. Construction of another 248 units was underway in 1990. The master plan showed another 350 townhouses and apartments on the two remaining parcels. Additional residential and office development could also occur on the parcel owned by Sanitary District No. 1.

Physically separated from the rest of the city by Highway 101, San Quentin Peninsula development has a regional focus. This is particularly so because of its proximity to a major interchange with Highway 101, the Larkspur Ferry Terminal with service connecting Marin County to San Francisco, and the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge which provides easy access to the East Bay and an improved Highway 580. In 1989, some of the 375,000 square feet of office space in this area was reported to be the most expensive in Marin County (as high as \$36 per square foot per year).⁸

GREENBRAE EAST

The 30 acres of land lying east of Highway 101 and south of Corte Madera Creek is an area of very mixed uses in a range of building sizes and types. Located there are about 300 mobile home sites in two trailer parks, a small retail center (Marin Central Plaza), industrial uses (ready-mix concrete company, construction business, glass-making), and some service industries (auto repair). The uses are a product of an earlier stage in Larkspur's history when manufacturing, heavy commercial uses, and mobile homes developed in central Marin. Today, the unusual variety of commercial uses helps to meet several community needs, and the mobile homes provide affordable housing. In 1989, the City rezoned portions of the area to a new Mobile Home Park district to ensure that the mobile homes would not be forced out by other uses. These areas are designated Mobile Home Park on the Land Use map.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Three public schools in Larkspur, one in Corte Madera, and two in Kentfield are designated Public Schools on the Land Use map. Current enrollments and projections are covered in Chapter 5, Community Facilities and Services.

1. **Redwood High School**, a 60-acre site on the south side of Doherty Drive between the Niven Nursery property and a commercial area in Corte Madera, is

⁸ Grubb & Ellis Co., San Rafael.

in the Tamalpais Union High School District. The district offices and corporation yard and two alternative high schools are also on the site.

2. **Henry C. Hall Middle School** occupies a 9.7-acre site on the north side of Doherty Drive. Piper Park wraps around the east and north sides of Hall, and Boardwalk No. 1, a residential area, is on its west side. Hall Middle School is in the Larkspur School District.

3. **Larkspur-Corte Madera School**, a 5.3-acre school site on Magnolia Avenue near the Larkspur/Corte Madera city limits, is no longer used as a public school because of declining enrollment. The buildings are occupied by the Larkspur School District offices and a private school, and the grounds (and playground equipment provided by the private school) are open to public use.

The following school lies outside Larkspur but is attended by Larkspur children in the Larkspur School District.

Neil Cummins School, a 10-acre site on Mohawk Avenue in Corte Madera bounded by Corte Madera Town Park and single-family homes.

The following two schools lie outside the City of Larkspur but are attended by Larkspur children who are in the Kentfield School District.

Anthony G. Bacich Elementary School (K-5), a 9.5-acre site on McAllister in Kentfield bounded by Creekside Park, Marin Catholic High School, and single-family homes.

Adaline E. Kent Middle School (6-8), an 8.7-acre site at College Avenue and Stadium Way in Kentfield bounded by Creekside Park, Marin Catholic High School, and commercial uses.

Larkspur also has two private schools which are included in the same land use category as surrounding uses: **St. Patrick's School**, 120 King St.; and **Marin Primary School**, 20 Magnolia Avenue (the Larkspur/Corte Madera School site).

Marin Catholic High School is at the corner of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Bon Air Road in Kentfield, in the Larkspur Sphere of Influence.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

City Hall and Fire Station No. 1 share a site at the corner of Magnolia Avenue and King Street.

Fire Station No. 2, Drake's Landing, is on Barry Way near Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

The Larkspur Ferry Terminal is located on 25 acres owned by the Golden Gate Transit District, on the south side of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard east of Highway 101. Commuters embark for San Francisco from the ferry terminal. Most of the site is occupied by surface parking.

The Police Administration Building/Corporation Yard occupies about 1.5 acres in the southern portion of Piper Park.

Public facilities outside Larkspur but in its Sphere of Influence include:

San Quentin Prison, 432 acres which lie between the eastern City Limits, Highway 580, and the San Rafael city boundary.

Marin General Hospital, a 16-acre site on Bon Air Road.

Kentfield Fire District's Fire House, located on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard at its intersection with College Avenue.

OPEN SPACE AREAS

Parks

Larkspur's nine neighborhood parks and one community park are shown as Parkland on the Land Use map. A wide landscaped path along the east side of Magnolia Avenue between Bon Air Road and Dartmouth Drive is also designated Parkland. The neighborhood parks range in size from one-third acre to eight acres, and vary in use from nature observation to active recreation. The community park is **Piper Park**, which has 22 acres. A complete description of Larkspur's parks can be found in Chapter 5, Community Facilities and Services.

Creekside Park, 13 acres on the northerly side of Corte Madera Creek just west of Bon Air Road, is in the Larkspur Sphere of Influence, and is owned and operated by the Marin County Parks Department.

Hillside and Railroad Open Space

About 260 acres of land in the southwestern corner of Larkspur is designated Open Space. This area is part of the Marin Open Space District's **Northridge Open Space Preserve** which covers more than 1,000 acres on the Blithedale

and Corte Madera Ridges that connect to Mount Tamalpais. Another 76 acres within Larkspur (131 acres including unincorporated areas) is being added to the preserve. (As of September 1990, the property is in escrow.) The 20-acre ridge above Larkspur Landing is designated as open space because it must remain open under conditions of development approval of the Lincoln Terraces apartments. Portions of the railroad right-of-way along Holcomb Avenue, used as bike and pedestrian path and owned by the County, are also shown as open space.

Shoreline/Marsh Conservation Areas

Portions of the shoreline along Corte Madera Creek are designated Shoreline/Marsh Conservation areas. The Shoreline/Marsh Conservation areas are not continuous along the creek because of preexisting development. The designation applies to a 600-foot long strip on the south side of the creek between Larkspur Plaza Drive and Bon Air Road. The width of this strip ranges from about 60 to 145 feet (where it expands into a wetland mitigation area) and covers 2.8 acres of marshland, drainage ditch/view corridor, and bike path.⁹

Other areas designated Shoreline/Marsh Conservation are (1) the marsh that borders Redwood High School on the south and east, which varies in width from 150 feet to 450 feet, with the widest expanse at the southeast corner of the high school grounds; and (2) a strip of land between the properties on Harvard Drive and Corte Madera Creek.

East of Highway 101, the land between Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and San Francisco Bay, as well as the periphery of Wood Island and land beneath the Greenbrae interchange, are designated Shoreline/Marsh Conservation areas.

College of Marin

Most of the College of Marin is in unincorporated Kentfield. The 25.7 acres of within Larkspur is designated Educational/Environmental Resource Area. The Larkspur City Council adopted this designation in 1988 in response to an initiative petition. Uses are limited to outdoor athletic and recreational programs and activities, landscape management and horticultural educational, environmental science, and nature study, and floodplain and wildlife habitat. No additional structures are allowed on the land, except for classrooms, consistent with State law which gives community college districts independence from local zoning where their educational programs are involved.

⁹ Fish and Wildlife Service maps were the source for this information. The Audubon Society, in a communication of March 10, 1990, notes that "Tidal marshes exist in a continuous strip along Corte Madera Creek, except in a few locations along South Eliseo Drive where buildings have been constructed over the creek, where interrupted by bridges, and where substrate has been covered by riprap or boat docks at the Greenbrae marina."

LAND USE GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

This section, combined with the Land Use map, contains Larkspur's Land Use Goals, Policies, and Programs. Their overall aim is to **preserve and enhance Larkspur's unique physical and natural setting, and its basically residential character, while accommodating suitable new development.** This includes protecting Larkspur's hillsides and creeksides, and the vegetation, views, and general peacefulness associated with these natural characteristics.

Neighborhoods

Goal 1: Maintain the overall residential character of Larkspur.

Goal 2: Preserve the integrity, cohesiveness, historic character, and residential environment of existing neighborhoods.

Goal 3: Encourage a diverse demographic (especially age, family, and income) mix in Larkspur.

The Housing Element of the General Plan includes an objective (#3), a policy (3.1), and a program (3.2.1) aimed at developing a greater share of housing attractive to families. At the same time, Larkspur wants to keep the many desirable physical and social characteristics its neighborhoods now have. To protect the integrity and cohesiveness of existing residential neighborhoods, incompatible land uses and densities must not be allowed. The Land Use map and the following policies and programs are designed to provide those protections.

Policy a: Residential density standards shall consider neighborhood characteristics, existing uses, surrounding uses, impact on the traffic capacity of the street system, access to services, geotechnical conditions, and natural resources.

Policy b: Residential development should not be at such a high density that it has an unacceptable impact on the street system serving the area.

Action Program [1]: Apply open residential standards (up to 0.2 unit per gross acre) to areas having special open space value. This designation is also suitable for areas with limited development potential because of their unusual configuration (e.g., railroad right-of-way) or difficult access.

Action Program [2]: Apply very low density residential standards (up to 1 unit per gross acre) to hillside areas with landsliding, seismic, or other geotechnical problems. This designation is also suitable for areas with special open space value.

Action Program [3]: Apply low density residential standards (up to 5 dwellings per gross acre) to hillsides and other environmentally sensitive areas, as well as within established low-density neighborhoods.

Action Program [4]: Apply medium density residential standards (up to 12 dwellings per gross acre) to areas near commercial districts, such as Old Downtown, if consistent with adjacent land uses.

Action Program [5]: Apply high density residential standards (up to 21 dwellings per gross acre) only in areas within easy reach of arterials, public transit, and commercial centers that provide a range of goods and personal services.

Policy c: Allow maximum densities in the medium and high density residential categories as described in this Plan only in those developments that promote social and economic diversity and environmental benefits, and only where care is taken to preserve neighborhood scale and ambiance. (It is intended that this policy be in harmony with Goal 4, below.)

Goal 4: Maintain the existing neighborhood scale.

As land costs rise, property owners seek to maximize their investments by extensively remodeling and expanding existing houses. In some cases, they may even find it economical to tear down an existing house in poor condition and replace it with a new, larger house. This is especially true in older neighborhoods where houses were built many years ago as summer cottages.

While the private redevelopment of single-family homes increases property values for their owners and their neighbors, it may also threaten the character and scale of existing neighborhoods. Some of the large new houses literally overshadow their smaller neighbors, although they meet all zoning ordinance requirements. Others are proposed that can't meet today's setback, site coverage, floor area ratio, and parking requirements. Property owners then seek approval of a variance, use permit, or exception (depending on the requirement). For floor area ratio exceptions, the Planning Commission must make a finding that the visual scale and bulk of the new house is compatible with the pattern in the neighborhood before approving the application.

Policy d: Limit the visual bulk of houses so that they fit in with neighboring homes and the physical setting.

Action Program [6]: Explore, and implement as feasible, general standards or Design Review Board requirements to control the bulk of second story and other major additions to single-family houses.

Retail and Commercial Areas

Larkspur has seven retail and commercial areas. Each of the seven commercial areas plays a separate role in serving the shopping, office, and service needs of the community and the region.

Goal 5: Enhance the attractiveness and viability of existing commercial areas.

Goal 6: Encourage existing commercial districts (1) to provide an adequate mix of neighborhood-serving businesses, and (2) to be accessible by means other than the auto.

Policy e: Maintain existing retail commercial areas in attractive physical condition, and work to retain their special character and amenities.

Action Program [7]: For each defined commercial district, allow and encourage only those uses that reinforce the district's role, function, and scale.

Policy f: Discourage the creation of new commercial areas.

Policy g: Allow expansion of existing commercial areas only under conditions that will not be detrimental to the surrounding residential community or existing retail uses in the city, that will improve the City's economic base, and that will reinforce the role or function of the areas as defined in Action Program 7.

Action Program [8]: Require applicants for development approval to demonstrate conformance to Policy "g" satisfactory to the planning commission and city council.

Action Program [9]: Develop floor area ratios to limit the intensity of commercial, retail, industrial, and professional office development.

Maximum floor area ratios are given in the definitions of each land use category shown on the Land Use and Circulation map.

Policy h: Protect the integrity and cohesiveness of existing commercial areas.

Action Program [10]: Minimize through traffic.

Action Program [11]: Require new development to incorporate design features (building orientation, building materials, parking location, landscaping) that encourage pedestrian use and emphasize positive relationships with neighboring buildings and uses.

Downtown

As the historic center of Larkspur, Downtown is unique among the City's commercial districts.

Goal 7: Preserve the character of Old Downtown (especially its historic character) and its surrounding neighborhoods.

Goal 8: Preserve the current mix of commercial, public and institutional, residential, and professional office uses in the Old Downtown and the residential areas nearby.

Goal 9: Enhance the commercial vitality of Old Downtown.

One major threat to preserving Downtown is the heavy commute traffic passing through Downtown on the Tamalpais Drive/Magnolia Avenue/College Avenue route that connects Highway 101 in Corte Madera with Upper Ross Valley communities. The Circulation chapter of this General Plan includes policies and programs to deal with the commute traffic. Policy "n" and Action Program 18 below also address Downtown circulation issues.

Another threat to Downtown is competition from large shopping centers and discount stores, both within Larkspur and in nearby communities. Downtown Larkspur should capitalize on its Historic District status, walking scale, and other assets to improve its economic standing. A 1989 survey found that Downtown businesses were viewed as friendly and personal, but that there was not enough diversity, and Downtown needed to improve its appearance.¹⁰ The City of Larkspur should cooperate with business organizations to enhance the physical environment of the Downtown and attract a diversity of new busines-

¹⁰ Larkspur Community Association survey, February 1989.

ses. Community-serving business should be encouraged, while taking into consideration the economic viability and the street vitality of the Old Downtown. Building preservation, restoration, and any new construction should be in harmony with the street scale and historic periods represented.

Policy i: Maintain the existing scale of commercial establishments (smaller services and retail business), and the pedestrian orientation of the Old Downtown.

Action Program [12]: Develop incentives to promote the retention and development of rental residential units on the upper floors of buildings in the Old Downtown.

Action Program [13]: Prepare a Specific Plan for the Old Downtown which addresses appropriate uses, traffic, parking, economic vitality, building preservation, and design of new development, as well as the link between the Old Downtown, the Larkspur Plaza (Lucky) Shopping Center, and North Magnolia Avenue.

Action Program [14]: Join the California Main Street Program.

The California Main Street Program, administered by the State Department of Commerce, assists cities with promotional programs, design advice, and plans to improve their downtowns. Although a Larkspur application to the Main Street Program in 1986 was denied, the City should try again to join the Program.

Policy j: Maintain and enhance the architectural character of Old Downtown.

Policy k: Maintain and enhance Downtown landscaping.

Action Program [15]: Require landscape screening of off-street parking.

Action Program [16]: Develop design guidelines for use by the Environmental and Design Review Board and the Heritage Preservation Board in reviewing Downtown development.

Goal 10: Create a “sense of place,” a focus, along Magnolia Avenue to serve as a town center for Larkspur.

Policy l: Reinforce the image of Old Downtown as the clearly identifiable town center of Larkspur.

Policy m: Strengthen the tie between the Magnolia Avenue shops and the newer shopping center at the corner of Magnolia Avenue and Doherty Drive.

Action Program [17]: Create a town square at or near the Ward-Magnolia intersection.

Development proposals for Downtown properties within the Specific Plan Area (designated on Figure 2-6, following page 42) will not be considered until completion of the Specific Plan called for in Action Program 13. It is intended that the Specific Plan respond to the goals and policies for Downtown, beginning with Goal 7.

A major focus of the Specific Plan should be the block on which the Chevron/Walker property is located—a property which may be a good location for a town square. This 1.3-acre property consists of a vacated gas station and a section of abandoned railroad right-of-way with two historic railroad buildings. There are other potential locations for a plaza on this block, each of which has merits: the existing public parking lot at Ward Street and Magnolia Avenue, in which case a new parking lot could be built on the former gas station, and the right-of-way between the Larkspur Plaza shopping center and the Chevron property. A plaza strategically located on this block can tie together the old Downtown and the Larkspur Plaza shopping center at the corner of Magnolia Avenue and Doherty Drive. A Specific Plan for this block and its surroundings can also address ways to create a transition from the shopping center to the Niven Nursery property.

Policy n: Improve access to Old Downtown, but do not encourage or permit new thoroughfares parallel to Magnolia Avenue, or one-way streets.

Action Program [18]: Create additional non-vehicular (pedestrian and bicycle) access points to Downtown to supplement Magnolia Avenue.

The Downtown Specific Plan should consider, among other things: (1) benches or other public seating; (2) a farmers' market, open-air fresh food arcade, or similar facility at a future town square or other Downtown location; (3) the possibility of using the Lark Theater as a public or private cultural center as well as a movie theater; and (4) creating additional non-vehicular (pedestrian and bicycle) access points to Downtown to supplement Magnolia Avenue, such as completing the trail link on the Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way. (New thoroughfares parallel to Magnolia Avenue, or one-way streets, should not be permitted.)

Greenbrae East

The Larkspur Planning Department conducted a special study of the “East of 101” area (now called Greenbrae East) in 1987. A community survey at the time found that most residents and property and business owners preferred to maintain the status quo, rather than encourage changes in land use. As one result of the study, the City Council created the Mobile Home Park Zone District, which allows only mobile home and recreational vehicle parks. The new zone district was applied to 10.7 acres of land where there are existing mobile home and recreational vehicle parks.

The “East of 101” Study also identified flooding and protection of adjacent marshes as major land use issues. The Corte Madera Ecological Preserve borders the Greenbrae East area on the east, and the Corte Madera Shorebird Marsh borders it on the south and southeast.

Goal 11: Maintain the present mix of retail, service, industrial, and residential uses in the Greenbrae East area.

Goal 12: Maintain and provide housing in Greenbrae East affordable to seniors and to young families.

Policy o: Encourage trailer parks to remain in the Greenbrae East area.

Action Program [19]: Require new or expanded uses in Greenbrae East to be compatible with existing residential uses or to be sufficiently buffered from them to mitigate any negative impacts.

Policy p: Ensure that new development in Greenbrae East retains a sense of the area’s physical setting by providing vistas of the ridgelines and access to the adjacent creek, marshlands, and the Bay beyond.

Policy q: Ensure that existing uses and new development in Greenbrae East are sensitive to the fragile environment of the adjacent marsh.

Action Program [20]: Allow access to the marshlands by people and pets only in designated areas.

Most of the old Northwestern Pacific railroad right-of-way to the east and the marshlands beyond are in the City of Corte Madera. Between the two cities there is a small unincorporated pocket—a portion of the railroad right-of-way

and the Greenbrae Boardwalk. Greenbrae Boardwalk is a houseboat colony of 50 houses stretching along the south shore of Corte Madera Creek near where it enters the Bay. This area is in the Corte Madera Sphere of Influence, although access is entirely from Larkspur. Residents must park their cars in a lot in the City of Larkspur and walk along the boardwalk to reach their homes. In 1989, the Marin County Planning Department recommended that this area be in the Larkspur Sphere of Influence, so that if it is ever annexed to a city, it will be annexed to Larkspur.¹¹

Vacant Properties and Those With Redevelopment Potential

As Larkspur reaches “build-out,” community attention focuses on the City’s few remaining parcels of land with development or redevelopment potential. To prepare for change on those parcels, this General Plan proposes specific development guidelines.

Goal 13: On those lots where development or redevelopment is expected to occur, integrate natural features into new development, to the greatest extent reasonably feasible.

Goal 14: Maintain Larkspur’s small-town character.

Policy r: Establish guidelines for the use and development of properties where change is expected to occur.

Action Program [21]: Encourage a vital and active use of the Chevron/Walker property that will also set aside appropriate public space and maintain the historic value and open space of the adjacent railroad right-of-way.

Action Program [22]: For a change in land use to other than the existing nursery uses, prepare a Specific Plan for the Niven Nursery property that identifies community desires for future use.

Action Program [23]: The City wants to encourage mixed use on the Safeway/Pizza Hut properties. The intent is that medium density housing will be provided as part of any redevelopment.¹² The City also wants to encourage retail uses that will be small in scale and will serve nearby offices or residences. To these ends, a Specific Plan will be

¹¹ Draft Community Facilities Element, Marin Countywide Plan, May 1989, page 5.

¹² As used in this Action Program, redevelopment means the demolition of existing buildings and the construction of new buildings; or an increase in the overall floor area existing on the property; or both—whether or not there is any change in land use.

required for these properties to determine the appropriate mix of uses before the properties are redeveloped. The precise density of any residential component will be determined at the time of adoption of the Specific Plan. Higher residential densities will be considered for housing that is affordable to seniors and others. The development is to take into account the properties' flood plain aspects, and the City is to establish conditions of project approval that will preserve path options along the creek. Prior to redevelopment of these properties, the existing buildings may be used for Commercial, as that term is defined in this Plan (see page 19), and with a use permit, for medical and dental offices.

Action Program [24]: Develop conditions of project approval for other sites with development or redevelopment potential.

Railroad Right-of-Way

Portions of the old Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way remain undeveloped in Larkspur. There is a north/south segment paralleling Holcomb Avenue from the south city boundary into Downtown, and an east/west segment paralleling William Avenue and the south boundary of Redwood High School. The latter segment continues in an easterly direction through Corte Madera and connects to a north/south segment on the east side of Highway 101.

Goal 15: Maintain the Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way for public benefit.

Policy s: Maintain the sylvan setting of the right-of-way west of Highway 101.

Policy t: Preserve the station buildings near Ward Street and the electric booster station on William Avenue.

Policy "s" refers to the portion of the right-of-way on the west side of Highway 101 where the years of abandonment have allowed trees and shrubs to grow up the sides of the embankment and into the right-of-way.

The Circulation and Trails and Paths chapters of the General Plan (Chapters 4 and 8) contain goals, policies, and programs on use of the right-of-way for transit and paths.

San Quentin Peninsula

Goal 16: Allow flexibility in the use and re-use of the Airporter site.

Policy u: Support retention of the present Airporter use on its 1.5-acre site near Larkspur Circle.

The City will be flexible with respect to the overall use of the property provided the Airporter or a similar transit-related use is retained.

Action Program [25]: Designate the Airporter site as Public Facility to permit transit-oriented use, but also allow other uses that will enhance and not interfere with transit-related uses.

Goal 17: Retain all or a portion of the San Quentin Prison site for park or other public use if prison use is discontinued.

San Quentin Prison was built in a beautiful natural setting. It would be a prime location for a park, either in its entirety or along its Bay frontage. However, there is little reason to expect that the prison will close. In 1989, the prison underwent a \$28 million renovation to convert it from a maximum to a medium security facility. As of 1990, the State of California was considering expanding the prison by 2,900 beds by 1993.¹³ While it is wise for Larkspur to state its goals for future use of the site, it is not timely to do more detailed planning.

Policy v: Work with the State, the County, and the City of San Rafael to prepare for eventual reuse of the San Quentin Prison property; continue to monitor prospects for future growth and change.

Policy w: Preserve the Bay frontage adjacent to Larkspur for public parks and open space, and the ridgeline as open space.

Regional Relationships

Larkspur lies within Marin County's eastern urban corridor, where most of the county's population lives and which contains 97.5 percent (23 million square feet) of the county's commercial and industrial floor area.¹⁴ Highway 101 is the major tie that binds the communities in the eastern urban corridor together. Larkspur is also part of a smaller sub-region, the Lower Ross Valley, with which it is even more closely linked—by Corte Madera Creek which flows through the valley, by traffic arterials, and by public service and school districts which cross city boundaries. In an urban area such as central Marin County, land use, transportation, and environmental problems transcend the boundaries of individual cities. Many of these problems can be solved only through a pooling of efforts that cuts across political and geographical boundaries.

¹³ Communication with Vernell Crittendon, Warden's Administrative Assistant, San Quentin State Prison, October 4, 1990.

¹⁴ Marin County Planning Department, April 1989.

Goal 18: Cooperate with other jurisdictions in solving regional problems, in protecting environmental resources, and in providing public services.

Policy x: Continue to participate with other communities in regional and countywide planning studies.

Policy y: Work with other communities to develop common policies for protection and enhancement of natural resources such as Corte Madera Creek.

Action Program [26]: Work with the communities of Fairfax, San Anselmo, Ross, and Kentfield on a set of common policies for Corte Madera Creek.

LAND USE CHANGES

This General Plan changes the land use designations of several areas and parcels of land from the designations shown on the 1973 General Plan. In some cases the changes simply sharpen the boundaries between land uses. (The 1973 General Plan was more schematic.) In other cases, they are actual changes in land use consistent with the goals of this General Plan. In addition, this General Plan shows changes in land use designations approved by the City Council between 1973 and 1989 and applies land use designations to areas within the Bon Air and San Quentin Planned Developments in a change from the previous practice of calling them Mixed Use with a list of potential uses.

Boundary Clarifications

The following boundaries have been adjusted: the Open Space area in the southwest corner of the city to reflect the present boundaries of the Northridge Open Space Preserve; the Open Space area on Little King Mountain to reflect the Tiscornia Estate addition to the Northridge Open Space Preserve; and the San Quentin Peninsula (Southern Heights) Ridge to correspond to the San Quentin Peninsula Master Plan.

Changes Approved by the City Council, 1973–1989

Several new parks are shown: Bon Air Landing, Greenbrae School, Hamilton, Heatherwood, Neighborhood, Miwok, Niven, and Remillard.

The new single-family subdivision on the former Greenbrae School site is designated Low Density Residential.

The College of Marin campus within the City of Larkspur is shown as Educational/Environmental Resource Area consistent with the City Council's 1988 action amending the General Plan.

Mixed Uses

Rather than being shown as Mixed Use, Downtown, the Niven property, Bon Air, and the western part of the San Quentin Peninsula are given land use designations consistent with existing or proposed uses.

New Land Use Category

Shorelines and marshes along Corte Madera Creek, Wood Island, San Francisco Bay, and Redwood High School are shown as Shoreline/Marsh Conservation. Most of these areas were formerly shown as Open Space. Their boundaries have also been more carefully delineated consistent with development approvals.

Land Use Changes

(Paragraph numbers below are not consecutive. They correspond to the numbers used in Figure 2-5 on page 42 and Figure 2-6, the fold-out map following page 42.)

1b. Most of the **Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way** parallel to William and Holcomb Avenues has been changed from Open Space to Open Residential. This difficult-to-develop area will remain predominantly open, but the designation will allow some economic use of the land. Two segments of the right-of-way owned by Marin County remain as Open Space. The Bicycle/Pedestrian Circulation Plan in Chapter 8 shows that a path is planned for the right-of-way.

4. The Historic Preservation Overlay Zone should be applied to the **Tiscornia Property** (site of the Historic Escalle Winery) on Magnolia Avenue to support the preservation and restoration of the historic winery buildings.

9. The 17.9-acre **Niven Nursery** property fronting on Doherty Drive is designated Low Density Residential. However, the present wholesale and retail nursery uses on the site are viewed as desirable and will be allowed to remain indefinitely. Therefore, the property will retain its present zoning of L-1, Light Industrial, and the zoning ordinance will be amended to restrict the property to its present use. The property will be rezoned when it is no longer used for

nursery, and a Specific Plan will be required before the property is redeveloped in any use other than nursery. (See Action Program 22 on page 35.) Some parts of this site may have potential for higher density residential—such as housing that is affordable to seniors and others—and commercial development, but potential problems with traffic, as well as transition to adjacent uses, must be addressed first.

11. The land use designation for the **Chevron/Walker** property will remain Downtown Commercial, but development proposals will be considered only after a Specific Plan is completed for the Downtown. (See Action Program 13, page 32.) A public plaza may be located somewhere in the block. (See page 33, Action Program 17 and the text following.)

*The plaza location decision should be viewed in the larger context of what will be developed in the entire area from the intersection of Ward Street and Magnolia Avenue north to Doherty Drive encompassing the western edge of the Niven property and the existing shopping center. For that reason, the General Plan designates this a special study area that requires preparation of a Specific Plan **before any further development is allowed.***

12. The land use designation for the two parcels known as “**Lincoln III**” is changed from Mixed Use to Low Density Residential, which will allow up to 5 dwelling units per gross acre. Although the master plan for this part of the San Quentin Peninsula called for a maximum density of up to 14 units per gross acre on Lincoln’s two remaining parcels, conditions have changed significantly since passage of the ordinance that adopted the master plan. Traffic has grown to the point where it strains the capacity of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, and new information about soils and environmental hazards has confirmed the fragility of the site. The General Plan therefore recommends a designation that will allow up to 90 dwelling units on the two parcels. The ultimate number of units will depend on the application of the slope ordinance to these properties.

14. The 1.5-acre **Airporter** site near Larkspur Landing Circle has been changed from Mixed Use to Public Facility to permit future transit-related use. The parcel could be used for a transit station and parking lot if the adjacent railroad right-of-way becomes a transit line as recommended by this and other Plans. (See Goal 16, Policy “u,” and Action Program 25 on pages 36–37.)

15. The 9.9-acre **Sanitary District No. 1** site (which is surplus sanitary district property) has been changed from Mixed Use to Medium Density Residential except for about four acres fronting directly on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard which is designated Administrative and Professional Offices. The office use would be compatible with adjacent uses on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and

would buffer the multiple-family area behind (north of) it from traffic noise. Access to the office area should be from Larkspur Landing Circle for reasons of safety and traffic flow. Some park space should be provided as a buffer from and access to Tubb Lake. The area may need archaeological reconnaissance.

18. The **marsh** area along the south and eastern boundaries of Redwood High School has been changed from Public to Shoreline/Marsh Conservation. □

Figure 2-5
Changes to the Land Use Map¹⁵

<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Name and Parcel Number</u>	<u>Recommended Land Use Category</u>	<u>Parcel Size in (Acres)</u>	<u>Approximate Maximum Development Potential¹⁶</u>
1b.	Northwestern Pacific Railroad (21-173-02, 04, & 05, & 214-12)	Open Residential	6.28 ¹⁷	1-2 single-family units
6, 7.	Safeway and Pizza Hut (20-122-05 & -06)	Commercial	3.85	60,000 sq. ft offices/retail ¹⁸
9.	Niven Nursery (22-110-25 & -29)	Low Density Res., with higher density allowed for affordable housing ¹⁹	17.9	90 units (or more, if higher density affordable housing)
12.	Lincoln III (18-191-19 & 21)	Low Density Residential	18.2	90 units
14.	Airporter (18-191-07)	Public and supporting facilities	1.5	Flexible, to support transit terminal and parking
15.	Sanitary District No.1 (18-171-32)	Med. Density Residential and offices	9.9	72 MF dwellings, and 61,000 sq. ft. of offices
18.	Redwood H.S. Marsh (Part 24-01-58 & 24-01-61)	Shoreline/Marsh	12.0	None

¹⁵ Cf. Draft EIR, March 1990, Tables 14–15, pp. 66–67.

¹⁶ The ultimate number of units or square feet of building area will depend on the application of the slope ordinance, parking requirements, and the like, and therefore the figures in this column are not to be considered in any way as entitlements.



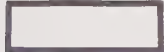
¹⁷ Acreage calculated by City Planning Department.

¹⁸ The intent is to foster mixed use when the properties are redeveloped. Cf. Action Program 23, p. 35.

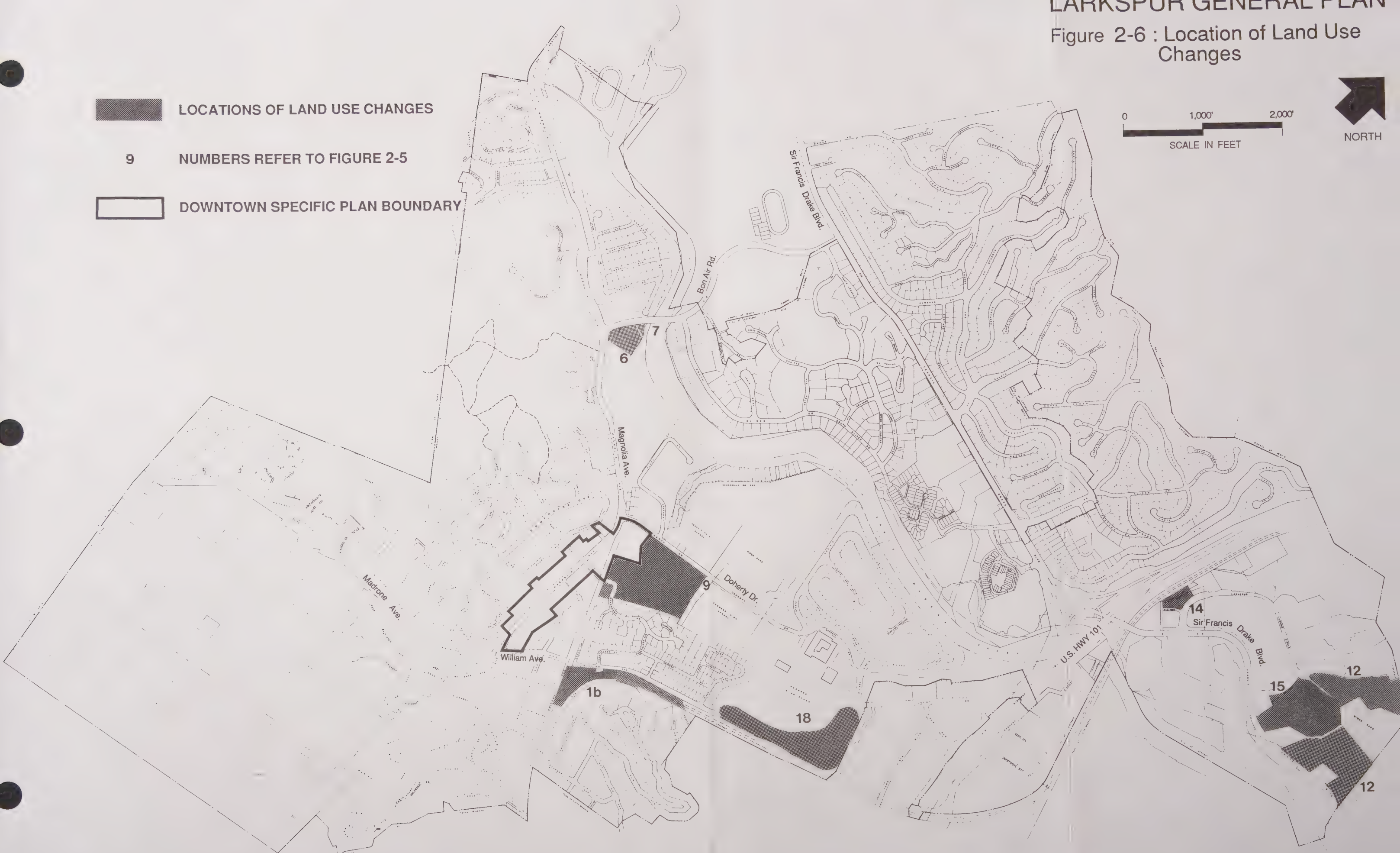
¹⁹ Specific Plan Required. The intent is to maintain the present uses on the site for as long as they are viable. Cf. Action Program 22, page 35.

LARKSPUR GENERAL PLAN

Figure 2-6 : Location of Land Use Changes

-  LOCATIONS OF LAND USE CHANGES
-  NUMBERS REFER TO FIGURE 2-5
-  DOWNTOWN SPECIFIC PLAN BOUNDARY

0 1,000' 2,000'
SCALE IN FEET



Chapter 3. Community Character

The City has set as a major goal to preserve, enhance, and strengthen community identity. The first part of this chapter briefly discusses the elements of Larkspur's community character, its boundaries, the natural and built environment, and the gateways to Larkspur. (Appendix A describes "gateways" into the city, and Appendix B portrays each of the city's 27 neighborhoods.) The section concludes with a set of Goals, Policies, and Programs that relate to community character.

This chapter also discusses historic and archaeological resources and concludes with a set of Goals, Policies, and Programs relating to the preservation of those assets.

THE ELEMENTS OF LARKSPUR'S CHARACTER

Larkspur is an unusual and fortunate community. Its character—tangible and identifiable—results from the combination of its small "Main Street" focus (Magnolia Avenue); the town's magnificent natural setting among mountains, valleys, and water; and its older residential areas, with their mature trees, immediately around Magnolia Avenue.

Boundaries

Larkspur's boundaries are not clear. Larkspur lies within Marin County's eastern urban corridor, where most of the county's population lives, and is one of several communities in the Lower Ross Valley. Curving around Larkspur in the shape of a horseshoe on its northwest are the unincorporated communities of Kentfield and part of Greenbrae. The San Quentin Peninsula (east of Larkspur Landing to the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge) is also adjacent and within Larkspur's Planning Area.

In addition to the adjacent unincorporated areas, Larkspur is bounded by the cities of San Rafael on the north and Mill Valley and Corte Madera on the south. While highly visible ridges form natural boundaries between Larkspur and San Rafael and between Larkspur and Mill Valley, the city's boundaries with Corte Madera and unincorporated Greenbrae and Kentfield are not at all apparent. The absence of typical boundaries—creeks, major roadways, distinct changes in land use—makes it very difficult to identify where the transition occurs from one community to another. Indeed, half of Greenbrae is in the City of Larkspur and half is unincorporated, and its separate identity is reinforced by its postal zip code—Greenbrae 94904 (part of San Rafael's Post Office)—versus Larkspur 94939.

The Natural Environment

Throughout Marin County, open space—particularly along hillsides and ridge-lines—has played a major role in shaping urban form. The general physical form of Larkspur and Corte Madera together can be described by viewing the left hand from above, with thumb and index finger separated and extended: The thumb represents the Corte Madera Ridge¹, which separates Larkspur from Mill Valley; the index finger represents the Southern Heights Ridge², which separates Larkspur from San Rafael and extends eastward to form the San Quentin peninsula. The area between the thumb and index finger represents the flatter and more urbanized areas of Larkspur and Corte Madera. Where the thumb and index finger join, the Lower Ross Valley narrows and extends northwest into Kentfield and Ross. At the open end of the two fingers is the San Francisco Bay.

The only topographical separations between Larkspur and Corte Madera are Palm Hill and the right-of-way and embankments of the former Northwestern Pacific Railroad. Also, because Greenbrae is built on the visible south-facing slope of the “Southern Heights Ridge,” the separation between Larkspur and San Rafael is not as clear.

Major highway routes have also been greatly affected by topography. Excluding Highway 101, there are only two continuous routes through Larkspur, and both were sited to conform to topography. Sir Francis Drake Boulevard is the east-west connection between West Marin, the Upper Ross Valley, Larkspur, San Quentin, and the East Bay. After coming east through the center of the Ross Valley, the road hugs the base of the Southern Heights Ridge (Greenbrae), and after passing north of Wood Island and the Ferry Terminal (two important landmarks), the road follows the shoreline of the Corte Madera Channel before diverting northward over the ridge and around San Quentin to the Richmond Bridge. The north-south route (College Avenue, Magnolia Avenue, Corte Madera Avenue, and Camino Alto) hugs the base of Ross Hill (opposite College of Marin) and the base of King Mountain (at Bon Air Road).

Most of the area between these roads is flat land, water, and marsh. Major exceptions are Bon Air Hill, Wood Island, and Palm Hill. Corte Madera Creek flows through the center of the valley floor. Although the once natural lines of the creek have been engineered into a wide flood-control channel, the creek still meanders in several “S” curves. Overall, it is a pleasant looking waterway, and northwest of Bon Air Road, bicycle/pedestrian paths run along both banks.

¹ Official USGS nomenclature. Its eastward extension between Corte Madera and Mill Valley is more commonly known as the North Ridge (of Mill Valley).

² Official USGS nomenclature.

The Built Environment

All of Larkspur's "flatland" housing lies in the valley between Magnolia Avenue and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. The community's hillside houses are located on Palm Hill (a small landmark hill of single-family houses), on Bon Air Hill (a larger landmark, all multiple-family), in Greenbrae (north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard to the top of Southern Heights Ridge, and all single-family), west of Magnolia (primarily single-family, with Skylark Apartments being a major exception), and east of Highway 101, north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard (all multiple-family).

In very general terms, residences first developed in Larkspur west of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad; second, they were built north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard (Greenbrae); and only third, did housing move into the flatland areas toward the creek. Greenbrae is the city's largest neighborhood and represents the second wave of houses. The third wave—the newest developments—lie east of Magnolia Avenue, north of Doherty Drive, south of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

These are very diverse areas. Many of them have views of and access to mountains and ridges, or to the creek and Bay, or both. Appendix B discusses each neighborhood in terms of its particular personality and amenities.

No discussion of the urban form or community character of Larkspur can overlook the role of Corte Madera Creek. While the creek is an obvious open space resource and provides a focus along the length of the community, it also divides north Larkspur from south Larkspur. Between College Avenue on the northwest and US Highway 101 on the east, only Bon Air Road bridges the creek. The result is that from the easterly sections of the community, one must go "out of town"—on a tortuous route through Corte Madera—to travel between north and south Larkspur.

Gateways

One's general impression of Larkspur depends on the point from which the community is entered or the place from which the city is observed. Larkspur is entered at six major gateways—one from the east (from East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard alongside San Quentin Prison); one from the north (descending from the Southern Heights Ridge southbound on US Highway 101); two from the west (southbound on College Avenue from the College of Marin, and eastbound on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from Wolfe Grade Drive); and two from the south (northbound on Magnolia Avenue from Corte Madera, and northbound on US Highway 101 above the NWPRR right-of-way and just south of—before—

the Lucky Drive intersection). The visual impressions from each of the gateways is quite different; they are reviewed in Appendix A.

NEIGHBORHOODS

While there is some recognition of a larger image of community, most Larkspur citizens also see themselves as coming from a specific neighborhood. Many of these neighborhoods are named after the original development, which may have had only a few dozen homes. The size and location of these neighborhoods is a direct product of the scale and pace of development in Larkspur over the years. Thus, one way to define Larkspur is as a collection of neighborhoods.

Appendix B divides the city into five planning areas and 27 neighborhoods. (These are shown on Figure B-1 in Appendix B.) First the location and boundaries of the neighborhoods are described. Then, for each neighborhood, a more detailed description is provided.

GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Larkspur's many assets include the historic and compact Downtown, the variety and individuality of the city's neighborhoods, the cohesiveness of several recent projects and planned developments, mature street and yard landscaping, many bicycle paths, *etc.* Detracting from the assets are the fragmentation of the community, the undefined boundaries, overhead utility lines, and traffic intrusion from other communities. (Regarding traffic intrusion, while it is true that Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Magnolia Avenue carry traffic to other communities, that traffic does not pour through Larkspur's neighborhoods. In that respect, Larkspur is indeed fortunate.)

The following Goals, Policies, and Programs are designed to preserve and enhance the positives and eliminate the negatives.

Goal 1: Preserve, enhance, and strengthen community identity.

Policy a: Streets should be named for trees, natural features in the area, or local historic persons or places.

Goal 2: Maintain Larkspur's livable and attractive environment.

Policy b: Preserve the desirable features of the built environment as well as the remaining natural environment—trees, marshes, creeks, hill-sides—as components of Larkspur's community character and identity.

Action Program [1]: Start a tree-planting and preservation program that will encourage sensitive site planning, the retention of existing trees, the planting of new trees (especially native species), and the replacement of trees that are removed.

Policy c: Seek ways to strengthen the ties between neighborhoods while preserving neighborhood individuality and uniqueness.

Action Program [2]: Prepare an Urban Design Plan for Larkspur.

The Plan will identify the relationship between existing and proposed development and the natural setting, and will identify the characteristics of the natural and constructed environment that are considered desirable. Goals, policies, and programs will be developed to preserve and strengthen community character; to improve the design quality of new development, major remodelings, and public improvements; and, thus, to guide the design of development in the city into the next century.

Action Program [3]: Link neighborhoods with paths.

Policy d: Visually integrate the various sections of the community.

Action Program [4]: Make consistent use of common design elements such as street lamps, signs, street trees, the Larkspur banners, and landscaping.

For example, (1) Larkspur's distinctive pennant/banners could be installed at all public buildings and, in clusters, at all entrances to the City; (2) Victorian or other older-looking street lamps could be installed Downtown, with more modern lamps used elsewhere in the city. (Were the latter example implemented—to strengthen community identity—probably no more than two or three types of lamps should be used in the entire city, with each type carefully selected in terms of appearance, function, cost, maintenance, and ability to withstand vandalism.)

Policy e: Draw the community together; psychologically and socially integrate the various sections of the community.

Action Program [5]: Sponsor community-wide events and programs and community improvement programs.

Policy f: Seek to eliminate overlapping political and geographical divisions within Larkspur.

Policy g: As opportunities arise, modify the boundaries for municipal functions (police, fire, land use, sewage, storm drainage, school districts, *etc.*) so that they become more coterminous.

Larkspur already provides police and fire service and regulates land use within its boundaries, but the city is divided among several school districts. Greenbrae and Kentfield are divided among police, fire, and land use. All of these areas have in common their trash collection service, water supply, and flood control.

Action Program [6]: Pursue annexations and de-annexations as necessary to foster more rational service area boundaries.

Appropriate environmental analyses should be undertaken for all annexations and de-annexations pursuant to this program.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

This Historic Resources portion of this chapter replaces the 1978 Heritage Preservation Element which established the City's comprehensive program for identifying and preserving historic resources.

Much of Larkspur's charm and character derives from its rich architectural heritage. Its historic resources are irreplaceable assets that contribute to the special and unique character of the city and are a source of identity and pride for its residents. In recognition of the importance of these resources to its community image, Larkspur has made a major commitment to historic preservation, in both the public and private sector.

In the 1970s, the Larkspur Heritage Committee took the first steps toward an historic preservation program by surveying the city to identify historic buildings, places, and organizations. Their survey resulted in the publication of *Larkspur Past and Present*, a comprehensive 140-page document which organizes all the identified historic places into eight geographical areas: Downtown Larkspur; Central Larkspur; "The Loop"; Baltimore (Madrone) Canyon; Baltimore Park; Boardwalk #1 (Larkspur Boardwalk) and the Magnolia Avenue Victorians; North Larkspur (Murray Park and Escalle); and Greenbrae, San Quentin Peninsula, and Greenbrae Boardwalk.

The survey provided the foundation for action by the Larkspur City Council in 1978 to adopt an historic preservation program. The Council added a Heritage Preservation Element to the General Plan; created an Historic Preservation Board; added an Historic District to the Larkspur zoning ordinance; and approved an Historic Resources Inventory.

The City's historic resources inventory—based on the list in *Larkspur Past and Present*—is described by ordinance as “structures, sites, areas, and natural phenomena” which fit one or more of the following criteria: reminders of events and persons important in history, examples of once-common structures, unique or irreplaceable assets, examples essential to maintaining the overall historic character of an area, or structures having architectural significance.

The “H” Historic combining zone has been applied to Downtown properties fronting on both sides of Magnolia Avenue between William Avenue and Doherty Drive, and has also been applied to the Remillard Brick Kiln on East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. In addition to the local designation of historic places, the Remillard Brick Kiln, the Dolliver House at 58 Madrone, the Alexander Avenue Bridge, and the entire Downtown have been placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Brick Kiln is also a State Historic Landmark.³

The Dolliver House is said to be the first house constructed in the new township of Larkspur in 1888.

The Alexander Avenue Bridge is a concrete structure which arches over the old Northwestern Pacific Railroad tracks between Alexander and Acacia Avenues. It was built in 1927.

Thirty historic buildings and sites, including City Hall, are in the Downtown Historic District. The buildings “present a capsule history of the town,” according to *Larkspur Past and Present*, because all periods of the city's history are represented.

The Remillard Brickyard was a booming operation from 1891 to 1915. The kiln was restored as part of the construction of an office development on the site.⁴

The heritage preservation program is designed to be a community activity, relying on citizen participation for its effectiveness. The program establishes a framework for the identification, establishment, and protection of sites, structures, and artifacts of architectural, historical, archaeological (see next

³ Conversation with Nancy Curley, Larkspur Heritage Preservation Committee Board, May 17, 1989.

⁴ *Larkspur Past and Present* (Larkspur Heritage Committee, 1979).

section) or cultural significance. Also protected are significant natural resources, geologic features, trees, and other plant materials.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Coast Miwok Indians lived along Larkspur's marshes and creeks, and hunted in the heavily wooded hills around Mount Tamalpais until the 1800s. Their ancestors lived in the area as long as 3,600 years ago. Evidence of their prehistoric presence has been found in eleven "shell mounds" within the Larkspur Sphere of Influence (five of them within the city limits), as well as a habitation site near College of Marin, CA-MRN-406, and a quarry site, CA-MRN-525, within the city limits).⁵ Finds of prehistoric material have included chert and obsidian flakes, projectile points, mortars and pestles, shells and bones, and human burials.

The exact location of these sites is kept confidential by the California Archaeological Inventory (CAI) to prevent vandalism and artifact hunting and to protect landowners from trespass.⁶ Access to site location information is usually limited to landowners, cultural resource consultants, planners, and scholarly researchers. Those granted such access sign an agreement to keep the information confidential and not to disclose it to unauthorized individuals or in documents distributed to the public.

In addition, one unrecorded site is known to exist within the Sphere of Influence, near the upper end of Baltimore Canyon. A possible site on Wood Island has been mentioned locally, but CAI has no records of an archaeological site at that location. It should be noted, however, that less than five percent of the Larkspur Sphere of Influence has been surveyed for cultural resources, and there is a high probability of additional unrecorded sites.⁷ Therefore, before any ground-disturbing activity occurs, it is important that archival or field studies or both be conducted on a project-specific basis.

⁵ Communication from Vicki Beard, California Archaeological Inventory, Northwest Information Center, June 30, 1989. The shell mounds are sites CA-MRN-67 through 79 and CA-MRN-255.

⁶ California Government Code §6254.10 exempts archaeological site information from the California Public Records Act which otherwise requires that public records be open to public inspection.

⁷ Communication from Vicki Beard, California Archaeological Inventory, Northwest Information Center, June 30, 1989.

Goals, Policies, and Programs for Historic and Cultural Resources

Goal 3: **Assure the survival of Larkspur's special "sense of place."**

Policy h: Encourage broad-based community interest in and support of preservation activities.

Policy i: Identify significant archaeological, historic, and natural resources representing all of the ethnic, cultural, and economic groups that have lived and worked in Larkspur.

Action Program [7]: Maintain an up-to-date inventory of existing historic resources, including artifacts, structures, sites, areas, and natural phenomena.

Action Program [8]: Maintain a City-adopted list of historic, archaeological, and natural resources worthy of preservation.

Action Program [9]: Map the location of historic districts and historic and natural resources.

Policy j: Safeguard and maintain significant historic, archaeological, and natural resources.

Action Program [10]: Administer the heritage preservation ordinance so as to provide for the appropriate development and maintenance of historic resources and their environments.

Action Program [11]: Maintain and support the Heritage Preservation Board.

The Heritage Preservation Board is the body that recommends to the City Council the designation of historic resources either for landmark or historic district status, or for "H" zoning. In conducting its work, the Board prepares forms and submits applications for properties determined to be worthy of being listed as State Landmarks or placed on the National Register of Historic Places. It issues certificates of recognition for locally designated historic resources.

Under the "H" zoning, all applications for building, grading, or demolition permits, or on any other work which might be authorized by zoning, are subject to review and action by the Heritage Preservation Board. The Board may

recommend conditions of approval to the appropriate City review person or body.

Action Program [12]: Apply the “H” Historic zone to other historic buildings or places, such as the Escalle Winery.

Insofar as possible, seek the cooperation of property owners for historic designation and zoning.

Policy k: Accommodate anticipated development and population growth in ways that will not damage Larkspur’s historic, archaeological, and natural resources.

Action Program [13]: Provide a quick-response mechanism for saving resources threatened by construction or demolition.

Action Program [14]: Establish design guidelines for property owners, developers, and public agencies to use with respect to land use and building construction in areas of identified historic, archaeological, or natural significance.

Action Program [15]: Review all public policies, and modify them as necessary, to support the policies of this chapter to protect and preserve historic, archaeological, and natural resources while protecting the general health, welfare, and safety of the public.

Action Program [16]: Direct capital improvement programs toward protecting, preserving, rehabilitating, and enhancing historic, archaeological, and natural resources.

This effort might include locating existing federal, State, regional, and local funding resources to underwrite preservation and rehabilitation; exploring private funding sources for the same purpose; and developing training programs in the crafts and skills needed for preserving historic, archaeological, and natural resources.

Action Program [17]: Provide local incentives for restoring and maintaining historic, archaeological, and natural resources.

These might include reduction or elimination of application, permit, or hook-up fees; flexibility in land uses allowed; or increases in density.

Action Program [18]: Coordinate City and other public agency programs so that the City's objectives and standards for preserving historic, archaeological, and natural resources are met.

For example, the City should assure that the State's alternative building code requirements for historic structures are followed.

Action Program [19]: Use the principles and practices of land use planning to promote the preservation of historic, archaeological, and natural resources.

The City should review its existing zoning regulations to identify deficiencies relating to preservation, and should then adopt amendments to foster preservation.

Goals, Policies, and Programs for Archaeological Resources

Goal 4: Promote a greater awareness of and sensitivity toward Larkspur's archaeological heritage.

Policy l: The City shall cooperate with the CAI toward the protection and preservation of artifacts in those areas already identified as containing archaeological remains.

Policy m: The City shall cooperate with the CAI in the development of information which will allow the prediction of additional sites likely to contain archaeological remains.

Action Program [20]: Programs of public information will be initiated to make property owners aware of background data on archaeologically significant structures or sites on their properties.

Action Program [21]: All development applications and public projects that require EIRs will routinely be sent to the "California Archaeological Inventory—Northwest Information Center" at the Department of Anthropology, Sonoma State University, for review and recommendations regarding archaeological findings.

In those areas identified as being the actual or probable sites of archaeological remains, any projects on City land or requiring the issuance of permits by the City will be investigated during plan review to determine whether valuable archaeological remains will be affected by the project. Upon the first discovery

of any archaeological findings, development activity will be halted until professional archaeological examination and preservation is accomplished.

Policy n: The City shall take all possible precautions to insure that no action by the City results in the loss of the irreplaceable archaeological record present in the City's planning jurisdiction, and shall work with the County toward that end.

Action Program [22]: The City shall promote the preservation of archaeological sites by considering any significant remains in its planning for parks.

Funds from federal, State and local sources should be sought to acquire archaeological sites for park or other public purposes, and to preserve any artifacts.

Action Program [23]: The City may permit land uses other than those designated on the General Plan Land Use and Circulation map on sites with archaeological merit, in order to preserve the archaeological record.

The substitute use would have to be compatible with the surrounding area or the proposed development of the surrounding area. The effect of this program is to permit a land use other than the use called for on the General Plan Land Use and Circulation map, if that substitution will preserve archaeological qualities.

Action Program [24]: Where an archaeological site is in proximity to a project under review, City staff in conjunction with CAI will determine the particular qualities to be preserved and the methods of preservation. □

Chapter 4. Circulation

This chapter describes the existing circulation system and travel characteristics in and around the City of Larkspur. It also projects future demand for travel, based on “build-out” of the Land Use Plan and the anticipated circulation deficiencies that would result, and suggests potential ways to alleviate these inadequacies. At the conclusion, these technical analyses are brought together with practical community needs and desires, and presented as the Circulation Goals, Policies, and Programs.

Figure 4-1 (next page) shows Larkspur’s relationship to the regional circulation system. Circulation in the city and its Sphere of Influence (which includes the unincorporated areas of Greenbrae and Kentfield) is heavily influenced by its location at the junction of U.S. Highway 101 (the north-south spine of eastern Marin County) and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, the only east-west roadway that completely spans the county. As a result, the city is traversed by many “through” travelers.

Travelers move about Larkspur in a number of ways: roadways, fixed route local and commuter bus transit, airport feeder service (to San Francisco International), ferry service, para-transit, taxi, and bicycle, pedestrian, and equestrian paths. The 1980 census provides some insight into how Larkspur’s citizens travel to work. Although home-to-work trips are only one element of the traffic flow, they make up a large portion of peak hour traffic—the time when most congestion occurs (see Figure 4-2, page 57). Most Larkspur citizens either drive to work alone (58 percent) or share a ride (15.6 percent), for a total of almost three-quarters of commuters. Close to 17 percent took transit, and the remaining 10 percent used others methods, such as walking, bicycling, or motorcycling, or stayed at home.

It is also interesting to see where people work (see Figure 4-3, page 57). Almost equal numbers of people work in Marin County (46.6 percent) and San Francisco (46.3 percent). About 12 percent live and work in Larkspur. Smaller percentages work in other counties in the Bay Area.

**Figure 4-1
Regional Location Map**

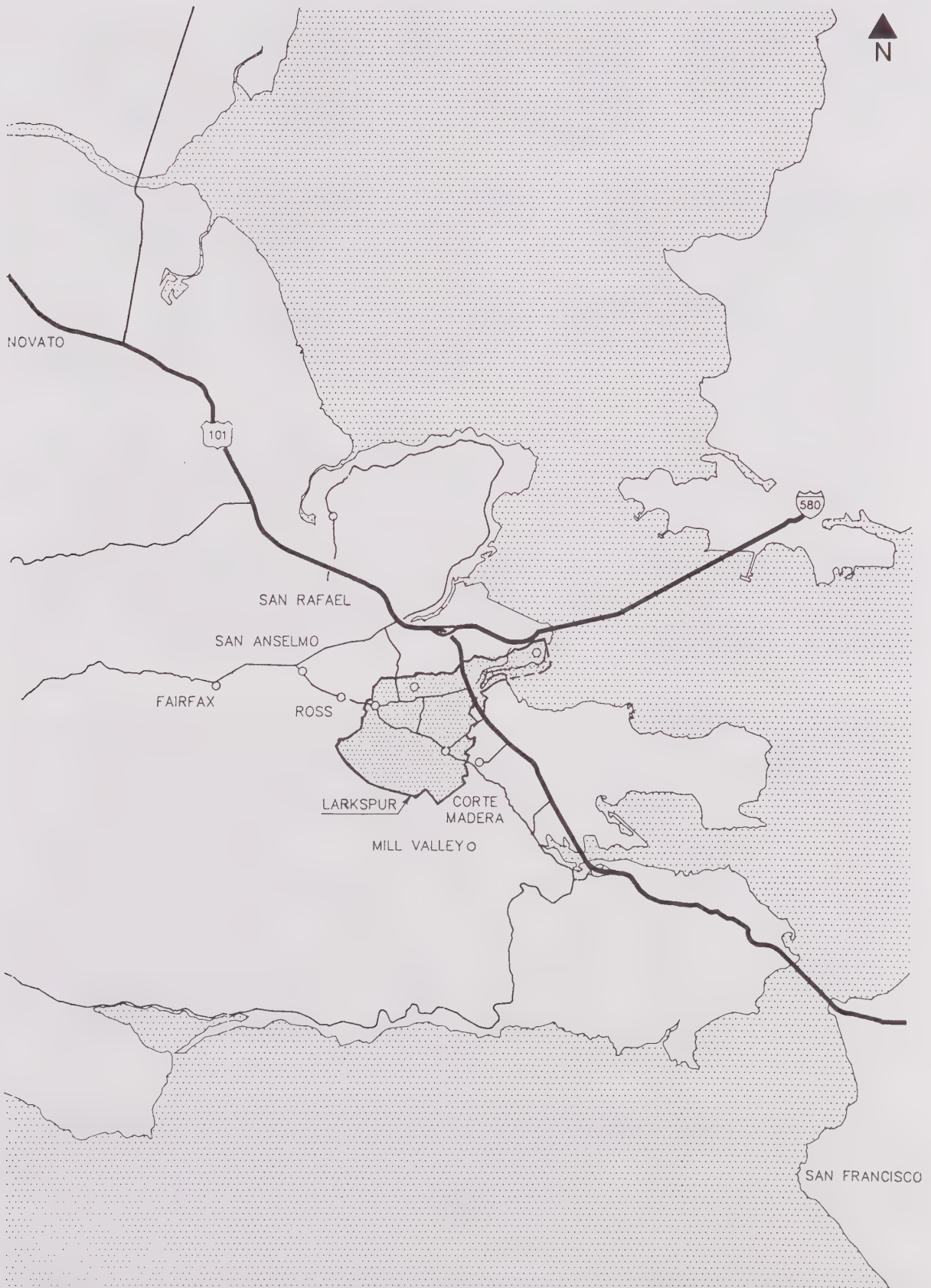


Figure 4-2
Mode of Travel To and From Work,
Larkspur Residents, 1980 Census

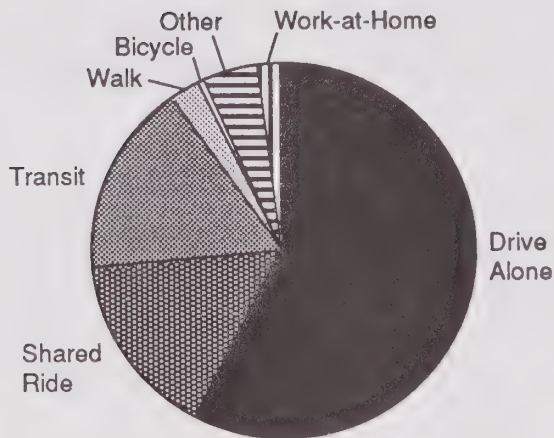
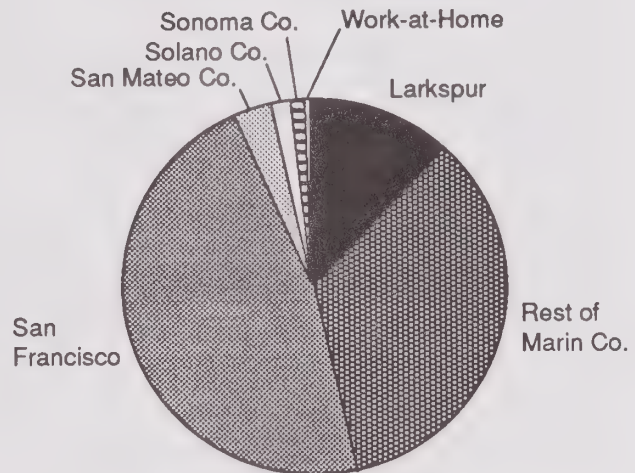


Figure 4-3
Location of Work Place,
Larkspur Residents, 1980 Census



ROADWAY CIRCULATION

Larkspur is served by three main traffic arterials which carry both local and through traffic (see Figure 4-4, page 59):

- Sir Francis Drake Boulevard;
- Corte Madera Avenue, Magnolia Avenue, and College Avenue; and
- Doherty Drive.

In addition, Highway 101 provides regional access. Other roads also serve important circulation functions in Larkspur:

- Bon Air Road, which connects Sir Francis Drake Boulevard to Magnolia Avenue.
- Wolfe Grade, which provides access to D street in San Rafael from Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

- Madrone Avenue, a collector serving the area west of Magnolia, south of Downtown.
- Redwood Highway, which parallels Highway 101 in the vicinity of the Lucky Drive/ Industrial Way interchange.

Other roadways in Larkspur provide local access to property. Although these are important, the main focus of the General Plan is on roads of city-wide significance.

Circulation options in the Larkspur area are relatively constrained. First, there are only the three through-corridors described above. Virtually all trips made in Larkspur travel on one or more of these roads. Second, there are only three crossings of Corte Madera Creek: one at College Avenue, another at Bon Air Road, and the third at Highway 101. Quite a bit of local travel uses the freeway just to get over Corte Madera Creek.

How Congested Are the Roads?

Traffic flow in urban settings is usually constrained by the manner in which traffic passes through intersections. Other factors that can reduce the ability of a roadway to handle traffic flow relate to frequency of driveway access, width of the roadway, and grade. Considering these characteristics of urban traffic flow, a measurement technique known as “Level of Service” is used by transportation engineers to compare conditions.

The Level of Service Concept

The Level of Service analysis results in a letter grade for each intersection studied, from A through F, with A being free flow with insignificant delays, to F, which is a gridlock condition. As part of its Circulation Assessment Permit (CAP) ordinance, the City of Larkspur has implemented a policy that intersections should not be worse than Level of Service (LOS) D during peak periods. However, some intersections on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard are operating at LOS E during peak periods.

Different techniques are used to evaluate Level of Service depending on the type of control at the intersection.

Figure 4-4
Primary Circulation System, Larkspur

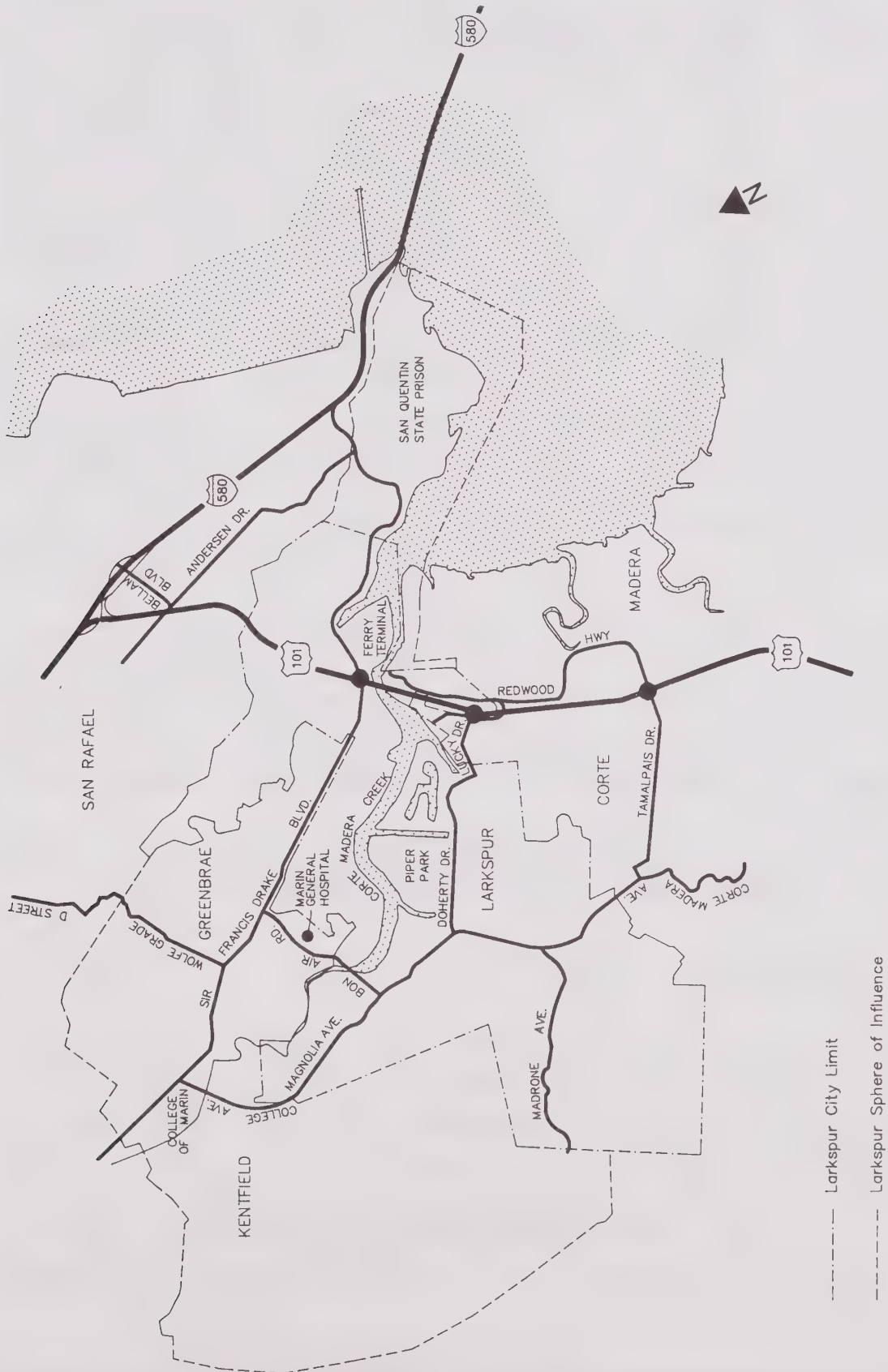


Figure 4-5
Level of Service Definitions, Signalized Intersections

<u>Level of Service</u>	<u>Vehicle Delay (Seconds)</u>	<u>Volume to Capacity Ratio</u>	<u>Description</u>
A	≤5.00	0.00-0.59	Free Flow, Insignificant Delays: No approach phase is fully utilized by traffic and no vehicle waits longer than one red indication.
B	5.1-15.0	0.60-0.69	Stable Operation, Minimal Delays: An occasional approach phase is fully utilized. Many drivers begin to feel somewhat restricted within platoons of vehicles.
C	15.1-25.0	0.70-0.79	Stable Operation, Acceptable Delays: Major approach phases fully utilized. Most drivers feel somewhat restricted.
D	25.1-40.0	0.80-0.89	Approaching Unstable, Tolerable Delays: Drivers may have to wait through more than one red signal indication. Queues may develop but dissipate rapidly, without excessive delays.
E	40.1-60.0	0.90-0.99	Unstable Operation, Significant Delays: Volumes at or near capacity. Vehicles may wait through several signal cycles. Long queues form upstream from intersection.
F	≥60.0	N/A	Forced Flow, Excessive Delays: Represents jammed conditions. Intersection operates below capacity with low volumes. Queues may block upstream intersections.

Source: *Highway Capacity Manual*, Special Report No. 209, Transportation Research Board, Washington, D.C., 1985.

Figure 4-6
Level of Service Definitions, Unsignalized Intersections

<u>Level of Service</u>	<u>Expected Delay</u>	<u>Reserve Capacity (Vehicles/Hour)</u>
A	Little or no delay	≤400
B	Short traffic delay	300-399
C	Average traffic delays	200-299
D	Long traffic delays	100-199
E	Very long traffic delays	0-99
F	Extreme delays potentially affecting other traffic movements in the intersection	≤0

Source: *Highway Capacity Manual*, Special Report No. 209, Transportation Research Board, Washington, D.C., 1985.

- **Signalized Intersections.** At signalized intersections, an overall relationship of the volume using the intersection to its capacity is translated into the Level of Service grade. Figure 4-5 (preceding page) provides definitions of each of the Level of Service grades, and their corresponding volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio. The Level of Service D threshold is represented by a V/C ratio of between 0.80 and 0.89.
- **Unsignalized Intersections (Minor Street Stop).** For unsignalized intersections where stop control is provided on the minor street only (*e.g.*, Magnolia Avenue intersection with William Avenue), each traffic movement that must yield to another movement is given a letter grade, based on the availability of gaps in the conflicting traffic flow to make the turn. Usually, the left-turning traffic from the minor street (*e.g.*, William Avenue) onto the major street (*e.g.*, Magnolia Avenue) has the worst Level of Service. Figure 4-6 on the preceding page summarizes the Level of Service definitions for two-way stop-controlled intersections. It should be noted that this type of intersection may generally operate with little delay, but left-turning traffic from the minor street could have difficulty finding a gap in the traffic flow on the major street, resulting in an “F” grade.
- **Unsignalized Intersections (All-way Stop).** For unsignalized intersections with all-way stop control (*e.g.*, Magnolia Avenue at King Street), an overall Level of Service indication for the intersection is possible, based on the relationship of volume to overall capacity. However, it is only possible to determine whether the intersection is better or worse than LOS C.

Note that it is not appropriate or possible to directly compare the Level of Service grade of one type of intersection (*e.g.*, signalized) with another type (*e.g.*, unsignalized).

Key Corridors

The following describes each key corridor in the city, its overall traffic flow characteristics under existing conditions, and as appropriate, Level of Service ratings at critical locations. Two illustrations have been prepared to highlight traffic conditions in Larkspur. Figure 4-7 (next page) shows estimated average daily traffic volumes at selected key locations on the city’s circulation system. Figure 4-8 illustrates locations where the Level of Service is approaching, at, or over the threshold of D ordained by the city.

Figure 4-7
Average Daily Traffic, Existing Conditions, 1989



Figure 4-8
Existing Level of Service Deficiencies, 1989



SOURCE: Robert L. Harrison, City of Larkspur
Traffic Mitigation Fee Program,
Final Project, November 1988.

Note: Service Level is not shown for intersections operating at LOS C or better.

Highway 101. Route 101 is usually quite congested in the vicinity of the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard interchange (also called the Greenbrae interchange), especially north of the interchange going up Cal Park Hill. Traffic from the northbound Sir Francis Drake Boulevard on-ramp merging onto the freeway exacerbates the capacity-reducing impact of the upgrade. In the southbound direction, there are conflicts between traffic entering the freeway and cars exiting at Lucky Drive. At the Lucky Drive interchange, the southbound on- and off-ramps meet Fifer Avenue and Nellen Avenue at the ramp terminus, resulting in difficulty for through-traffic on Nellen. Recent Caltrans studies indicate that there is little excess capacity on the freeway on the Greenbrae interchange ramps as they are currently configured. The 1987 volume south of the interchange was estimated by Caltrans to be 160,000 vehicles per day; north of the interchange Caltrans estimates 135,000 vehicles per day.

Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. This is a key east-west through-road in Marin County, stretching from Point Reyes on the west to the San Quentin Peninsula on the east. In the Larkspur Sphere of Influence, it begins on the west at the boundary with Kentfield as a four-lane, undivided roadway with some twists and turns, but becomes divided on the approach to College Avenue. In the commercial area east of College Avenue near the College of Marin, limited on-street parking is allowed. Further east, Sir Francis Drake passes the Bon Air Shopping Center, where significant turning traffic tends to cause delays in through-traffic flow.

As the road approaches the Greenbrae interchange, only the left lane continues through to East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard—the right lane becomes the southbound Route 101 on-ramp. For westbound traffic near the interchange, only one lane serves through-traffic, while two left-turn lanes lead to the southbound on-ramp. The interchange itself is an intricate assembly of ramps that separates conflicting traffic flows, with some non-standard characteristics. For example, traffic desiring to proceed northbound on Route 101 from the Redwood Highway on ramp just south of the Greenbrae interchange must first cross Sir Francis Drake Boulevard at grade. This additional traffic tends to degrade the Level of Service at this intersection to the D level currently experienced.

Just east of the interchange, East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard has two through lanes in each direction and a median as it passes the Golden Gate Transit Ferry Terminal and the Larkspur Landing mixed use development. East of Larkspur Landing, Drake becomes a two-lane undivided roadway with refuge for left-turning traffic. It continues past the State prison and intersects with Andersen

Boulevard in San Rafael, then leads directly onto the I-580 eastbound on-ramp and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

On Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, morning traffic flow is heavy, but not grid-locked. The area in front of the Bon Air Shopping Center (near Eliseo Drive), tends to experience some back-ups. In the evening, the situation is much worse, with long back-ups from Wolfe Grade eastward to the freeway. On the east side of the Greenbrae interchange, traffic also backs up through the old railroad trestle from a combination of traffic from the Golden Gate Transit Ferry Terminal, Larkspur Landing, and traffic heading from the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge towards Route 101 southbound. Average daily traffic volumes in 1988 on this road ranged from about 20,000 at the eastern city limit to about 52,000 just east of Eliseo Drive.

In particular, the intersections of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard with La Cuesta Drive and Eliseo Drive are either approaching or at capacity (LOS F—see Figure 4-8). Other locations of concern are unsignalized intersections where turning traffic from the minor street has difficulty finding a gap—Larkspur Landing Circle (east), Andersen Drive, and El Portal.

Magnolia Avenue. Magnolia Avenue begins north of the City of Corte Madera, at the intersection of Branch Avenue. South of this intersection, this non-freeway north-south corridor parallels Route 101, taking the name Corte Madera Avenue, Camino Alto, and Miller Avenue. For travelers to and from Larkspur, the combination of Magnolia Avenue and Redwood Avenue/Tamalpais Drive (in Corte Madera) provides convenient access to Route 101.

Northbound Magnolia Avenue first passes through the older Downtown area where it is a two-lane, slow moving facility with many driveways and intersections (most of which are stop-sign controlled) and on-street parking. Intersections in this area are tightly spaced (sometimes less than 200 feet apart), and left-turn pockets are not provided. There are also numerous pedestrian crossings, especially in the Old Downtown. These conditions combine to create congestion, where it is often difficult for pedestrians to cross, and where turning vehicles cause long queues because they do not have the protection of a turn lane. The Average Daily Traffic (ADT) on Magnolia Avenue in the vicinity of King Street was about 12,000 in 1988, a heavy volume for a constricted two-lane roadway.

North and west of Doherty Drive, Magnolia Avenue becomes more free-flowing, with fewer intersections and driveways. Further along, Magnolia Avenue runs through another commercial area, also with on-street parking, although the roadway is somewhat wider than in the Downtown area, and congestion is less. At the city limit, Magnolia Avenue becomes College Avenue, where it passes the College of Marin to end at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. The ADT at this northern terminus was about 14,500 in 1988.

Only the Corte Madera Avenue/Redwood Avenue intersection (not in the city or its Sphere of Influence) is rated in the unacceptable range (LOS F, see Figure 4-8, page 63). However, traffic conditions through Downtown Larkspur are cause for concern because of restricted room to maneuver, sight-distance problems, and the pedestrian/auto interface. In response to these problems and recent accidents, the City changed the traffic control at the Magnolia Avenue/King Street intersection (adjacent to City Hall) to all-way stop control. (Previously Magnolia Avenue traffic did not have to stop.) This configuration tends to cause congestion at this location, with queues sometimes extending to adjacent intersections. However, it is easier for pedestrians to cross Magnolia Avenue. Many times each year, Magnolia Avenue is gridlocked when traffic diverts from Highway 101 because of an accident.

Doherty Drive. This corridor provides both local access for community facilities (*e.g.*, Piper Park, Redwood High School, Henry C. Hall School, the Twin Cities Police Department) and several residential neighborhoods, and also serves as a through facility between Larkspur and Highway 101. The eastern portion of this through corridor passes through the neighboring city of Corte Madera, via Lucky Drive, Fifer Avenue, and Nellen Avenue. The ADT in the Larkspur portion of this corridor at Larkspur Plaza was about 8,800 in 1988.

At its western terminus, Doherty Drive is a wide, two-lane facility, with pedestrian crossings near the Hall School (at Larkspur Plaza Drive, and at Larkspur Boardwalk). Further east is another pedestrian crossing at Riviera Circle, serving the high school. This intersection also has four-way stop signs to provide the necessary control for pedestrians to cross safely. Just east of Riviera Circle is the Corte Madera city limit beyond which travelers to the freeway must turn left onto Lucky Drive. An additional turn onto Fifer Avenue is required for freeway traffic. There, southbound traffic can enter the freeway ramp directly, while northbound traffic must use Nellen Avenue to circle under the freeway to Redwood Highway, where the Industrial Way ramp is used.

Traffic generally flows reasonably well along this corridor, despite the twists and turns and stop sign controls. The heaviest flow occurs between 7:30 and 8:00 AM and between 3:00 and 3:30 PM, related to the start and end of the school day. Two intersections operate at LOS F, Fifer Avenue at Nellen Avenue (in Corte Madera), and Industrial Way at Redwood Highway (at the northbound freeway ramps). Both of these intersections are unsignalized.

Wolfe Grade. Wolfe Grade is a two-lane, undivided, winding, hilly road that connects Sir Francis Drake Boulevard to downtown San Rafael at D Street. It had a 1988 ADT of 13,700, and is often used, in conjunction with Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, to bypass Highway 101 when the freeway is congested.

Bon Air Road. Bon Air Road is a two-lane divided roadway where it passes Marin General Hospital. Just north of the hospital, it becomes a four-lane divided road. It serves mainly to connect Sir Francis Drake Boulevard with Magnolia Avenue, and provides access to Marin General Hospital and the residential neighborhood on Bon Air Hill.

Madrone Avenue. This road is narrow and winding, and serves many homes west of Magnolia Avenue. Portions of the road are paved around old redwood trees.

Redwood Highway. This road parallels Highway 101 on the east side, serving as part of the Doherty/Lucky/Fifer/Nellen/Redwood freeway access. It also serves the industrial land use, trailer park, and Greenbrae Boardwalk, east of Highway 101.

Traffic Accident Patterns

A summary of accident frequency for the five year period between 1984 and 1988 was obtained from the Twin Cities Police Department. Figure 4-9 shows the total number of traffic accidents reported at locations on the primary street system where generally more than one accident occurred per year. Locations **in bold** are those that exceed the average number of accidents at all locations.

While this is not a definitive accident study, it does indicate the relative level of accidents at key locations in the city. The highest number of accidents over the five-year period occurred at the intersection of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard with the Route 101 northbound ramps (78 accidents, compared to an average of 22 per intersection). At this intersection, the high traffic volumes, combined with confusing geometrics and narrow channels under the railroad trestle, create hazardous conditions.

Figure 4-9
Accident Summary, City of Larkspur, 1984–1988

<u>Intersection</u>	<u>Total</u>
Magnolia at:	
Piedmont	11
Baltimore	7
Madrone	17
King	27
Cane	21
Ward	32
Doherty	31
Bon Air	28
Dartmouth	21
Frances	9
Estelle	8
Murray	12
Sir Francis Drake at:	
El Portal	10
Eliseo	19
NB 101 Ramps	78
Larkspur Landing Circle (W)	11
Larkspur Landing Circle (E)	57
Doherty at:	
Larkspur Plaza	19
Redwood High School	7
Riviera Circle	8
Bon Air at:	
South Eliseo	15
Intersection Average	22.4

Source: Twin Cities Police Department

Note: **Boldface** indicates where number of accidents exceed the average.

The second highest accident location was Larkspur Landing Circle (east) at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. A traffic signal has since been approved for this location, with installation scheduled for January 1991.

Other locations where the accident frequency was above the city average are clustered on Magnolia Avenue, in the Downtown area, and near Bon Air Drive.

Projected Future Conditions

In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of traffic studies, which were made for individual development projects, provided forecasts of future traffic on portions of the Larkspur street system. The most recent comprehensive study prior to this General Plan was undertaken in 1988 by Robert L. Harrison, in support of the City's Traffic Impact Fee Ordinance. His report combined estimates of growth in Larkspur and surrounding communities with regional estimates of travel growth through the year 2005 in order to forecast traffic volumes and the resultant service levels in Larkspur. The report also recommended a mitigation program which was adopted by the City Council and used as the basis for a Traffic Impact Fee (TIF) for new development.

The results of the Harrison study were summarized in the background document, *Larkspur General Plan Circulation Report*, which is part of the General Plan Technical Appendix. This information, together with discussions at several citizens' committee meetings, was used to develop the Goals, Policies, and Programs of the Circulation and Land Use chapters.

State law requires that the Circulation and Land Use elements be internally consistent. This was in part accomplished in Larkspur by coordination between the Land Use and Circulation sub-committees during the plan development process. The implications of the land use plan were then evaluated using a local area traffic model for the City of Larkspur and its environs.

Model Method and Assumptions

A traffic impact model was developed by DKS Associates to help quantify the effect that future development, allowed by this General Plan, would have on the road system in Larkspur. A traffic impact model is based on the assumption that traffic generated by new development will simply be added to existing travel patterns and volumes. In this process, no adjustments are made to travel patterns and volumes to and from existing development. This is a reasonable simplifying assumption to make in an area that is as close to "build-out" as Larkspur is, especially considering that no new major roadways are anticipated. The model uses TRACS™ software to aid the analyst in estimating the impacts of new development on traffic levels in Larkspur. The model's overall procedure was to:

- Evaluate traffic conditions from PM peak hour counts of turning movements at key intersections in the study area. For this study, 1988 was considered "existing." Existing Levels of Service were then calculated.

- Estimate the location and description of potential future development based on the General Plan Land Use chapter. The peak hour trip generation that would result from these developments was estimated.
- Determine travel paths to and from these developments.
- Estimate distribution of these trips on the different paths based on previous studies in Larkspur (see Figure 4-10).
- Estimate through traffic (see Figure 4-11).
- Load added traffic to existing volumes and calculate service levels.

Figure 4-10
Trip Distribution Assumptions

<u>Destination of Trips</u>	<u>Retail</u>	<u>—Land Use Office—</u>		<u>Residential</u>
		<u>West of 101</u>	<u>East of 101</u>	
Local Trips (Larkspur/Kentfield)	35%	10%	9%	18%
Highway 101 North	29%	44%	30%	26%
Highway 101 South	20%	18%	32%	51%
Sir Francis Drake East	2%	3%	19%	3%
Sir Francis Drake West	<u>14%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>10%</u>	<u>2%</u>
TOTAL	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Source: Fehr + Peers Associates, based on U.S. Census Journey-to-Work Data for Larkspur and travel surveys in the Larkspur/Corte Madera area.

Figure 4-11
Projected Growth in Through Trips, 1985–2005

<u>Larkspur Travel Corridors</u>	<u>Travel Patterns Served</u>	<u>Growth in Through Trips</u>
Magnolia	San Francisco to South Marin to the Upper Ross Valley.	8%
Doherty	San Francisco to South Marin to the Upper Ross Valley.	8%
West Sir Francis Drake	East Bay, San Francisco and South Marin to Upper Ross Valley and East San Rafael to Kentfield Area.	14%
East Sir Francis Drake	East Bay to South Marin.	18%

Source: Robert L. Harrison

Figure 4-12
Summary of Level of Service Analysis
and Recommended Improvements

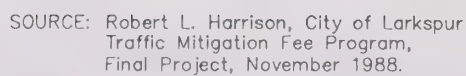
Intersection		Existing Control	Existing	Existing + Approved ¹	Buildout	Buildout w/ Improvements	Buildout Improvements
Andersen Drive	& SF Drake ¹	1 way stop	E/C	F	F	0.82 D	Signalize
Lark Land Cir E	& SF Drake	1 way stop	F	F	F	0.61 B	Signalize
Lark Land Cir W	& SF Drake	Signal	0.70 C	1.01 F	1.17 F	0.91 E	Add 1 EB left turn lane
101 NB Ramps	& SF Drake	Signal	0.77 C	0.92 E	1.02 F	0.81 D	Add 1 EB thru and 1 WB thru lane
101 SB Ramps	& SF Drake	Signal	0.34 A	0.39 A	0.40 A	0.40 A	
Eliseo Drive	& SF Drake	Signal	1.02 F	1.14 F	1.16 F	1.13 F	Add 1 SB left turn lane
La Cuesta Dr.	& SF Drake	Signal	0.96 E	1.08 F	1.15 F	1.15 F	
El Portal	& SF Drake	1 way stop	F	F	F	0.87 D	Signalize
Bon Air Rd.	& SF Drake	Signal	0.81 D	0.91 E	0.99 E	0.99 E	
Wolfe Grade	& SF Drake ²	Signal	0.72 C	0.83 B	0.87 D		
Laurel Grove	& SF Drake ²	Signal	0.54 A	0.63 B	0.68 B	0.68 B	
College Ave	& SF Drake ²	Signal	0.51 A	0.60 B	0.66 B	0.66 B	
College Ave	& Kent/Woodland ²	Signal	0.73 C	0.76 C	0.82 D	0.82 D	
Magnolia Ave.	& Estelle Ave.	3 way stop	< C	< C	< C	< C	
Magnolia Ave.	& Frances Ave.	3 way stop	< C	< C	< C	< C	
Magnolia Ave.	& Murray Ave.	1 way stop	C/A	C/A	D/B	D/B	
Magnolia Ave.	& Skylark/Dartmouth	4 way stop	< C	< C	> C	> C	
Magnolia Ave.	& Bon Air Road	Signal	0.60 B	0.64 B	0.75 C	0.75 C	
Magnolia Ave.	& Doherty Dr.	Signal	0.51 A	0.56 A	0.66 B	0.66 B	
Magnolia Ave.	& Ward St.	Signal	0.65 B	0.72 C	0.84 D	0.84 D	
Magnolia Ave.	& King Street	4 way stop	> C	> C	> C	> C	
Magnolia Ave.	& Madrone Ave.	1 way stop	E/A	E/A	F/A	F/A	
Magnolia Ave.	& William Ave.	1 way stop	C/A	C/A	D/B	D/B	
Magnolia Ave.	& Baltimore Ave.	1 way stop	D/A	D/A	D/A	D/A	
Magnolia Ave.	& Alexander Ave.	1 way stop	D/A	D/A	E/A	E/A	
Magnolia Ave.	& Wiltshire Ave.	1 way stop	D/A	E/A	E/A	E/A	
Magnolia Ave.	& Redwood ²	2 way stop	E/A	F/A	F/A	0.47 A	Signalize
Larkspur Plaza	& Doherty Dr.	1 way stop	D/A	E/A	F/A	F/A	
Larkspur Brdwlk	& Doherty Dr.	1 way stop	C/A	C/A	C/B	C/B	
Riviera Cir.	& Doherty Dr.	4 way stop	> C	> C	> C	> C	
Tamal Vista	& Fifer Ave ²	signal	0.65 B	0.67 B	0.77 C	0.77 C	
Nellen Ave	& Fifer/101SBRmp ²	2 way stop	F/A	F/B	F/C	A/A	Realign Nellen Avenue ³
Tamal Vista Bl	& Nellen Ave ²	--	--	--	--	0.88 D	New intersection
Redwood Hwy	& Nellen Ave.	Signal	0.69 B	0.74 C	0.80 D	0.80 D	
Redwood Hwy	& Industrial Way	2 way stop	F/E	F/E	F/F	0.83 D	Add 1 NB left turn lane and signalize
Bon Air Road	& South Eliseo Drive	Signal	0.71 C	0.78 C	0.91 E	0.91 E	

NOTE: Unsignalized intersection level of service defined as follows: 1, 2 way stops: minor-major left/major-minor left; 3, 4 way stop < C = better than C; > C = worse than C

¹ Includes anticipated growth in through traffic, not originating or terminating in Larkspur.

² Not in the city limits.

³ Construct Nellen Avenue between Tamal Vista Boulevard and Redwood Frontage Road and close NB lanes.



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Effect of Growth on Level of Service. To best illustrate the effect of growth on traffic service levels in Larkspur, three future scenarios were evaluated:

- Existing plus Approved Projects.
- Build-out.
- Build-out with roadway improvements.

Note that the “Existing plus Approved Projects” scenario includes anticipated growth in through traffic that does not originate or terminate in Larkspur. It therefore represents what will happen if Larkspur halted all growth not yet approved.

Figure 4-12 (table) and Figure 4-13 (map) show the anticipated Levels of Service under each of these conditions.

- **Sir Francis Drake Boulevard Corridor.** The effect of future growth on traffic conditions in Larkspur will be most heavily felt in the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard corridor. All intersections from Andersen Drive to Bon Air Road (with the exception of the southbound Highway 101 ramps) would operate at either LOS E or F in the PM peak hour, even considering only the effects of currently approved development plus through traffic. When the higher level of traffic anticipated at build-out is considered, all of these intersections would be in the F category, except for Bon Air Road, which would have a V/C ratio of 0.99, putting it almost at capacity.

In addition to the traffic service levels projected, further congestion can be expected on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from three sources: (1) construction on I-80 in the East Bay; (2) completion of the I-580 Freeway from I-80 to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge; and (3) the opening of the Richmond Parkway from I-580 near the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to I-80 at Hilltop. Nevertheless, East Sir Francis Drake can be made to operate at acceptable Levels of Service by:

- Signalizing the Andersen Drive intersection (in San Rafael).
- Signalizing the Larkspur Landing Circle (east) intersection.
- Widening Sir Francis Drake and making other intersection improvements at Larkspur Landing Circle (west) and the Highway 101 northbound ramps.

On the west side of Highway 101, however, only widening Sir Francis Drake Boulevard to three through-lanes in each direction would provide the capacity improvements needed to accommodate the anticipated traffic volumes. During the course of the citizens' committee meetings, there was a clear consensus that this was not an acceptable solution. The plan does not, therefore, include specific capacity improvements in this area, aside from provision of a traffic signal at El Portal, and minor approach widening at Eliseo Drive. Other potential improvements to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard that could have a beneficial effect on traffic congestion include increasing transit service in the corridor and providing shuttle service to the Larkspur Ferry terminal.

- ***Magnolia Avenue Corridor.*** Along the Magnolia corridor, conditions would not be as intense as along Drake, but there would still be locations with poor service levels. Most of the intersections in this corridor are stop-sign controlled. The one- and two-way stop-controlled intersections generally operate effectively, although there is some lack of available capacity for left turning traffic from the side streets onto Magnolia at most intersections, but especially at Madrone, Alexander, Wiltshire, and Redwood (in Corte Madera). An initial analysis shows that none of these would warrant a traffic signal, with the exception of Redwood. The worst condition is at Madrone, where poor sight distance exacerbates the capacity problem.

Based on the changes to the Land Use map as initially proposed by the Draft General Plan, the intersections of Magnolia with King and with Skylark/Dartmouth would operate at less than LOS C. However, the City Council has determined to keep the all-way stops to control the speed and flow of traffic on Magnolia Avenue, and to make it safer for pedestrians to cross.

The intersection of Corte Madera Avenue with Redwood Avenue in Corte Madera appears to meet warrants for a traffic signal. Corte Madera, however, has consistently opposed new traffic signals.

- ***Doherty Drive Corridor.*** The Doherty Drive corridor covers intersections that are in both Larkspur and Corte Madera. The Riviera Circle intersection with Doherty Drive (an all-way stop) would experience capacity difficulties, but would not warrant a traffic signal.

In Corte Madera, the intersection of Nellen Avenue with Fifer Avenue and the Highway 101 southbound ramps would become even worse than it already is. Corte Madera is considering realigning Nellen Avenue so that it intersects with Tamal Vista Boulevard, thus removing some of the traffic from the freeway

ramps intersection. The result of this improvement would be LOS D at the new Nellen/Tamal Vista intersection, and LOS A/A at the Fifer/ Nellen intersection.

System-wide Considerations

The future roadway conditions discussed above are based on the assumption that current travel patterns will remain relatively the same, and that there would be no diversion of traffic away from congested corridors to less congested ones. Thus, the conditions represent the *demand* for travel in the different corridors. As a practical matter, it is not possible for an intersection to accommodate more traffic than its capacity. As a result, the actual traffic flow on Larkspur streets will be different from that described above. The experience of traffic engineers in similar situations is that a combination of three things will occur:

- The peak period will lengthen, because some of the traffic that had been accommodated in the peak hour will begin to travel at another time.
- Some trips will use modes other than automobile, or will not be made at all.
- Some trips will be diverted to less congested routes.

This may be a policy by default, but lacking major improvements to the system, the critical intersections in the west Drake corridor will operate at capacity during the evening peak hours. Some traffic will be accommodated as in the first two bullets above, but some will be diverted to less congested routes, such as the Magnolia and Doherty corridors. It is also possible that some traffic will divert into San Rafael, along Second and Third Streets, and Red Hill Avenue. The result will be that an equilibrium will be reached, whereby all routes have approximately similar travel times, and have one or more sections that are at or approaching capacity.

Ride-sharing

Ride-sharing can take the form of an informal arrangement among co-workers who live and work close to each other, or can be arranged through a ride-sharing service. In Marin County, Rides for Bay Area Commuters uses a computerized matching service to help people organize car or vanpools. It will also assist with the lease of vans.

Parking

Larkspur, with its mix of older activity centers such as the Downtown, and newer, more auto-influenced areas such as Bon Air Shopping Center, Drake's Landing, and Larkspur Landing, has a variety of parking needs. Parking issues are discussed separately for each of the following areas:

- Downtown.
- North Magnolia.
- New Developments.
- Residential Areas.

Downtown. Parking Downtown is provided in a number of ways. The most obvious is the extensive on-street parking on Magnolia Avenue, which is signed as restricted to two hours duration between 7:00 AM and 6:00 PM. Additional on-street parking on side streets such as Ward Street is restricted to two hours. A City-owned parking lot has capacity for 27 cars—also restricted to two hours. In addition, many of the buildings provide their own off-street parking.

Overall, it appears that Downtown parking is generally adequate for current uses, except in the case of special events. If, however, there is an intensification of use, or if Downtown Larkspur becomes more attractive as a place to shop, thus increasing the demand for parking, then parking supply could become a constraining factor to economic revitalization.

North Magnolia. This area is home to businesses that cater primarily to local needs (*e.g.*, hardware, fruit/vegetable store, *etc.*). On-street parking is available on the southwest side of the street. Many businesses have their own parking facilities. Parking appears to be adequate in this portion of Larkspur.

New Developments. All new developments in Larkspur are required to provide off-street parking. There generally is adequate parking in these areas.

Residential Areas. Issues related to parking in existing residential areas are discussed on pages 83–84 under Policy “i.”

Future Issues. In general, as long as new development provides adequate parking, there should be no reason for concern about parking in Larkspur.

TRANSIT

Although travel in and through Larkspur is primarily oriented to the private automobile, several transit operators provide important services for those who cannot or prefer not to use cars. As noted earlier, over 16 percent of Larkspur residents use transit to get to work. These include: local bus service, commuter and basic bus service, ferry feeder and ferry service, para-transit, airport feeder service, and taxi service. There are also limited park-and-ride facilities in Larkspur.

Local Bus Service

Local bus service is provided by Marin Transit, which contracts with Golden Gate Transit for fixed route service. The following local transit routes serve Larkspur:

- **Route 1.** From Novato and San Rafael, service along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in Larkspur, terminating at the College of Marin.
- **Route 17.** Supplemental local bus service on school days, in Corte Madera and Larkspur, serving Hall Middle and Redwood High schools.
- **Route 21.** Service from College of Marin to Mill Valley.

Until recently, Marin Transit also provided service commonly known as the FAST route, serving Fairfax and San Anselmo. There had been discussions about Larkspur tying into this system. However, lack of funding caused the FAST route to be discontinued. Feasibility studies were underway in 1990 for expanding Marin Transit.

Commute and Basic Bus Service

Commute buses are operated by Golden Gate Transit, and provide service from communities in Marin and Sonoma Counties to San Francisco. Several routes serve Larkspur:

- **Route 18.** Commuter service from the College of Marin, along College and Magnolia Avenue, then to Highway 101 via Tamalpais Drive, and to San Francisco (Financial District, Civic Center, and Transbay Terminal).

- **Route 20.** From the Canal Street area of San Rafael, providing *basic* (local) service seven days per week, terminating in San Francisco (Civic Center and Transbay Terminal). There are several stops in Larkspur along Magnolia Avenue.
- **Route 24.** Originating in Inverness, with service along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Stops in the Larkspur area at the College of Marin, Eliseo Drive, and the Lucky Drive bus pad. In San Francisco, it stops in the Financial District and at the Transbay Terminal.
- **Route 30.** From Canal Street in San Rafael, along Andersen Drive, stopping at Larkspur Landing, with commute service to the Financial District in San Francisco.

There is the potential for service enhancement on Route 30, which serves Larkspur Landing. This service expansion would be coordinated with implementation of a park-and-ride facility at the Golden Gate Transit yard on Andersen Drive. No additional service is anticipated in Larkspur west of the freeway.

Ferry Feeder and Ferry Service

Golden Gate Transit runs ferry service from its terminal off East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard to the Ferry Building in San Francisco. Access to the ferry terminal is by private automobile, passenger drop-off, and bus feeder service. Ten bus routes serve the ferry terminal, only two of which actually serve Larkspur:

- **Route 15.** From the College of Marin to the Ferry Terminal via College Avenue, Magnolia Avenue, Tamalpais Drive, and Highway 101.
- **Route 19.** From Fairfax to the Ferry Terminal along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

The ferry runs as frequently as every half hour in the morning and afternoon peak hours on weekdays, at one-hour intervals during the rest of the day, and every two hours on weekends.

Para-transit Service

Para-transit is a specialized service for people with special needs (*e.g.*, elderly or handicapped), or in areas that are not efficiently served by fixed-route transit.

In Marin County, this service is provided through Marin Transit, which currently contracts the service out to Whistlestop Wheels. This dial-a-ride service operates seven days a week and evenings.

Airport Feeder Service

The Marin Airporter operates from the Larkspur Landing area to the San Francisco International Airport. It runs every 30 minutes, from 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM. The Marin Airporter currently leases its terminal space from Golden Gate Transit District (GGTD). It is possible that this space will be used by GGTD for other purposes. The Citizens' Advisory Committee recommended that the site be retained in public ownership to support the proposed transit-way along the adjacent rail right-of-way. City policy is to support retention of the present Airporter use on the present site. (See Land Use Policy "u" on page 37.)

Taxi Service

Taxi service in Larkspur is provided by two local companies, Larkspur Yellow Cab and Larkspur Taxi. In addition, two companies from nearby cities also serve Larkspur: Radio Cab and Bel Air Cab Service.

Park-and-Ride

Park-and-ride facilities in Larkspur are limited. Some spaces for ride-sharers are provided at the western edge of the Bon Air Shopping Center. Golden Gate Transit is considering opening a park-and-ride facility at its yard on Andersen Drive in San Rafael, after which Route 30 bus service to San Francisco would be expanded.

REGIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

As noted several times in the discussion above, the geographic location of Larkspur results in a high volume of through traffic, *i.e.*, traffic that does not begin or end in the city. As a result, actions in other communities, both from a development as well as an infrastructure perspective, can have a significant effect on travel in Larkspur.

The following is a summary of regional circulation issues that could affect Larkspur:

- ***Marin County General Plan.*** In 1989, Marin County was in the process of updating its general plan. Along with this, a countywide traffic model was being developed. Policies in this plan could have an effect on circulation patterns in Larkspur.
- ***Sir Francis Drake Signal Interconnection.*** The County has connected the traffic signals on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard between College Avenue and Highway 101. This allows for better progression of traffic along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, and a small increase in capacity.
- ***Use of the NWP Railroad Right-of-Way East of Highway 101.*** The Marin Transportation Authority has been analyzing options for use of this corridor for transit. How transit enters Larkspur and interacts with the ferry terminal will have important implications for traffic patterns.
- ***Highway 101 Interchanges.*** In 1989, Caltrans prepared project study reports (PSRs) for improvements to the Greenbrae and Lucky Drive interchanges. Proposals include closing off the existing Lucky Drive/Industrial Way interchange and rebuilding it as a standard diamond interchange at the point where Nellen Avenue passes under the freeway. The result of the study was that these changes will not be made until improvements are made to the main lanes of Highway 101.
- ***Cal Park Hill Auxiliary Lane.*** Caltrans plans to construct a northbound auxiliary lane from the Greenbrae interchange to the Bellam Boulevard interchange. This project is in the 1988 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and is programmed for funding in 1992/93.
- ***Highway 101 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes.*** Caltrans has a continuing project to construct HOV lanes on Highway 101 in order to complete the system from Novato to the Golden Gate Bridge. Lanes are currently in place south of Sir Francis Drake. The Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) lists completion of HOV lanes from I-580 to Sir Francis Drake. No funding source has been identified for this project.
- ***Local Growth.*** Residential and employment growth in Corte Madera, Ross, San Anselmo, Fairfax, San Rafael, and other areas will impact transportation in Larkspur. Larkspur needs to maintain liaison and coordinate with these communities on matters of growth and infrastructure improvements.

CIRCULATION GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

This section, combined with the Land Use and Circulation map, contains Larkspur's Circulation Goals, Policies, and Programs.

The circulation plan for the City of Larkspur is based on goals and policies to **provide safe and efficient transportation facilities that operate at acceptable Levels of Service, while not degrading the quality of life in the community.** To develop a consistent, implementable set of Goals, Policies, and Programs for Larkspur, the following factors were considered:

- Traffic conditions can be expected to degrade to unacceptable levels even if no additional development occurs in Larkspur beyond that already approved. Potential future development will, however, contribute to additional worsening of traffic conditions.
- The key bottleneck to travel through Larkspur is Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. This bottleneck could be relieved by providing an additional through-lane in each direction from Bon Air Road to Highway 101. Even this measure might not be sufficient to relieve congestion in the corridor, since Sir Francis Drake Boulevard is unlikely to be widened to more than two lanes west of College Avenue through Ross. The County project coordinating signals in this corridor provides some benefit for through traffic, but will not significantly affect the Level of Service.
- All-way stop control at several intersections on Magnolia Avenue tends to create bottlenecks to through-traffic, even under existing conditions. The bottlenecks will become much worse in the future.
- There was consensus in the Citizens' Advisory Committee that Sir Francis Drake not be widened, and that Magnolia be de-emphasized as a through-route and emphasized as access to Downtown.
- In 1989, Caltrans prepared plans to add a northbound auxiliary lane from the northbound on-ramp at Sir Francis Drake, over Cal Park Hill to the Bellam Boulevard ramp in San Rafael. This will encourage through traffic to stay on Highway 101, rather than using Drake as a through-route.
- Caltrans has not been able to find an acceptable solution to the Greenbrae/Nellen/Lucky interchange configuration. Corte Madera appears to be seriously pursuing the realignment of Nellen Avenue to connect directly with Tamal Vista

Boulevard. This will have the effect of partially relieving safety and congestion problems at the intersection of the southbound Highway 101 ramps with Nellen Boulevard and Fifer Avenue.

- It is likely that some form of transit-way will eventually be built along the NWP right-of-way parallel to Highway 101, providing service between Marin and Sonoma counties, and terminating near the Larkspur Ferry terminal. While this transit-way should provide benefits for regional travel, it has the potential to increase local traffic congestion.

Probably not all of the above factors will be realized. The Larkspur Circulation Plan seeks to make the most of existing conditions, anticipated changes beyond the direct control of the City, and changes recommended in other chapters of the General Plan.

Quality of Life

Goal 1: Regard quality of life in Larkspur as more important than mobility of traffic.

Goal 2: Provide safe and efficient local-serving transportation facilities and services for the movement of people and goods.

Goal 3: Ameliorate the impact of traffic on Larkspur's quality of life.

Goal 4: Improved local or regional transit service should not negatively affect Larkspur.

The circulation system in Larkspur needs to grow and change with the community. Transportation facilities and services need to respond to changes in the community so long as the circulation changes do not adversely affect the quality of life in the city. In other words, while almost any traffic problem can be solved, some solutions can create conditions detrimental to other important aspects of the quality of life. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the City's priorities lean toward quality of life where implementation of transportation facilities and services is concerned. It also will be important to make the circulation system as useful and safe as possible, and to have a coordinated program of implementing improvements.

Policy a: Develop a coordinated system of roads, bike paths, foot paths, public transit, and Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs.

Policy b: Remove hazards from the traffic system.

Policy c: Except for singly-developed single-family homes and vacant properties, proposed changes in existing use shall not add traffic to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

Policy d: Wherever possible, maintain standards for acceptable traffic Levels of Service during peak periods. Acceptable Level of Service (LOS) shall be defined for signalized intersections at the D level using planning procedures defined in Transportation Research Circular 212 or successor. The City acknowledges that LOS E exists at the following intersections and that most measures which would alleviate traffic congestion there would not be desirable:

- Sir Francis Drake Boulevard at Eliseo Drive;
- Sir Francis Drake Boulevard at La Cuesta Drive; and
- Sir Francis Drake Boulevard at Bon Air Road.

For unsignalized intersections, service level C shall be the lowest level acceptable during peak periods. Because poor service levels at unsignalized intersections do not represent the same level of delay to motorists as at signalized intersections, the City should develop specific requirements on a case-by-case basis.

Policy e: Conform to standard traffic engineering practices where practical.

Policy f: Encourage through traffic to use designated major arterials.

Policy g: Do not permit thoroughfares to divide the city.

Policy h: Design circulation facilities that minimize disruption of neighborhoods and communities.

Policy i: Prevent an increase in the number of cars parked on neighborhood streets.

Cars parked on narrow, winding, hillside roads block views of pedestrians and oncoming cars and impede access for fire trucks. Excessive on-street parking also creates an appearance of overcrowded neighborhoods. Larkspur requires that each single-family house provide two permanent off-street parking spaces for residents and two parking spaces for guests. Under standards established by ordinance, guest parking may be provided on the street if the street is wide enough. These parking requirements only apply to new houses or lots where a second unit is being added. In older neighborhoods, many houses do not meet these requirements.

Policy j: Prepare a program of traffic capacity improvements to ease traffic congestion.

Policy k: Give higher priority to preserving the existing configuration of streets and buildings downtown than to moving traffic through downtown.

Policy l: Do not permit heliports in the Larkspur Planning Area.

Policy m: Sir Francis Drake Boulevard shall not be widened to allow additional through-traffic lanes.

Policy n: Do not make capacity improvements to Magnolia Avenue that would encourage additional through traffic.

Action Program [1]: Perform an annual review of the circulation plan with respect to changing conditions. Prepare a priority list of capital improvements, maintenance, and programs.

Action Program [2] Actively cooperate with the County of Marin to seek workable capacity improvements to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard that are not disruptive to the community.

Action Program [3]: Maintain and improve the existing median strip landscaping on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

Action Program [4]: Add, maintain, and improve landscaping on thoroughfares to the maximum extent possible.

An example is Tamalpais Drive in Corte Madera.

Action Program [5]: Perform the following specific capacity and safety related improvements:

- Signalize the intersection of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard with Larkspur Landing Circle (east).
- Remove the railroad trestle from the roadway of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, east of Highway 101.
- Make capacity enhancing improvements on East Sir Francis Drake between Larkspur Landing Circle (west) and Highway 101, as follows:
 - ✓ on the northbound approach on Larkspur Landing Circle (west), add a left turn lane, and re-stripe the existing through/left lane as an exclusive through-lane.
 - ✓ on the eastbound approach to Larkspur Landing Circle (west), add a second left-turn lane.
 - ✓ extend the southbound-to-westbound merge lane at Larkspur Landing Circle (west) to the Highway 101 northbound ramps intersection, and create a third westbound through-lane at that intersection, with an exclusive right-turn lane.
 - ✓ add an eastbound through-lane at the Highway 101 northbound ramps intersection.
- Add a southbound-to-eastbound left-turn lane on Eliseo Drive at the intersection with Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.
- Signalize the intersection of Redwood Highway and Industrial Way, and add a northbound left-turn lane.
- Signalize the intersection of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard with El Portal.

Transportation Alternatives

Goal 5: Encourage attractive alternatives to the use of single-occupant automobiles.

Goal 6: Increase transit service in Larkspur.

Goal 7: Aim for lower levels of peak hour automobile traffic.

Goal 8: Keep airport transit service for Larkspur.

Goal 9: Reduce transportation-related sources of air pollution.

Larkspur probably has the most complete transit coverage of any city in Marin County, including local transit, commuter bus lines, and ferry service.

As Larkspur and the surrounding communities grow, the use of transit will need to play an even larger role. How to increase transit use is a bigger problem than Larkspur alone can solve. Marin and Sonoma Counties are addressing future problems through the Highway 101 Task Force. One of the main directions of this task force is to find a reasonable transit use for the NWP railroad right-of-way. Although no formal commitments have been made, it appears that some future use of this right-of-way for a rail system is possible, with a connection to the Larkspur Ferry Terminal likely. Discussions have also started again regarding extending BART, or BART-type service to Marin County.

From Larkspur's perspective, it will be important to develop and implement policies to encourage additional transit for its own citizens. It will also be important to continue to work with other agencies to come up with a regional transit option that serves Larkspur, but does not adversely affect it.

Policy o: Coordinate circulation and development so higher intensity uses such as commerce, professional offices, public services, and higher density residences are near major transit routes and are served by public transit facilities.

Policy p: Encourage increased transit ridership and use of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) techniques.

Policy q: Tailor public and private transit to the needs of older people.

Policy r: Encourage all employers to cooperate in reducing peak hour automobile traffic.

Policy s: Encourage continuation of the Larkspur Ferry terminal site as a transit hub if the Golden Gate Ferry should cease operation.

Policy t: Require adequate park-and-ride facilities.

Policy u: Work with transit operators to provide service in Larkspur and to resolve any parking difficulties through designation of parking facilities controls as needed.

Policy v: The following are the City's policies regarding future regional transit service in the Highway 101 Corridor:

- Minimize the impact on Larkspur and the existing road system.
- Use discrete or separate rights-of-way.
- Support a direct rail connection from the north via a new grade separation with Sir Francis Drake Boulevard along the approximate alignment of the existing trestle.
- Encourage eventual expansion of the rail line to the south.

Action Program [6]: Adopt a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) ordinance that sets specific goals for reducing the demand for travel by single-occupant private automobiles.

Action Program [7]: Cooperate with Golden Gate Transit, Marin Transit, and private transit providers to periodically review, modify, and upgrade transit service to best meet the needs of Larkspur residents, businesses, and schools.

Action Program [8]: Cooperate with the transit agencies to provide amenities at transit stops, such as benches, shelters, lights, maps, and telephones.

Action Program [9]: Using a Transportation Demand Management ordinance, encourage employers to allow flexible work hours and to help employees create vanpools or carpools.

Action Program [10]: Cooperate with Caltrans, Marin County, and the transit agencies to expand opportunities for park-and-ride and shared-ride parking lots in or around Larkspur.

Action Program [11]: Promote an exclusive mass transit corridor along the railroad right-of-way east of Highway 101.

Action Program [12]: Encourage shared-ride service to or from transportation terminals, and consider an ordinance to allow jitney service.

Internal and External Circulation Linkages

Goal 10: Create better ties between Larkspur, neighboring communities, and the region.

Corte Madera Creek is a natural boundary that separates the north and south portions of Larkspur. There are only three ways to cross in and around Larkspur: College Avenue, Bon Air Drive, and U.S. 101. It is important that Larkspur cooperate with its neighbors in planning new local circulation routes.

Policy w: As improvement programs are developed for freeway interchange redesign, take advantage of the improvements to provide links between parts of Larkspur.

Policy x: Work with regional agencies to ensure that Larkspur's needs and concerns are recognized.

Action Program [13]: Encourage and cooperate with the appropriate jurisdictions to accomplish the following specific improvements:

- Signalize the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Andersen Drive intersection.
- Signalize the intersection of Redwood Avenue/Corte Madera Avenue.
- Realign Nellen Avenue to connect directly to Tamal Vista Boulevard. Close the existing connection from Nellen Avenue to Fifer Avenue.

Freeway Access

Goal 11: Obtain safe freeway access for Larkspur.

The freeway interchange system that serves Larkspur is confusing and substandard. Caltrans has been studying improvements to both interchanges. It is important that Larkspur stay abreast of these planning and engineering efforts, and provide whatever input is necessary to improve this freeway.

Policy y: Redesign and rebuild both U.S. 101 interchanges (Sir Francis Drake and Lucky Drive/Redwood Highway).

Action Program [14]: Actively cooperate with Caltrans, County of Marin, City of Corte Madera, and City of San Rafael to find workable capacity and safety improvements to the Greenbrae and Lucky Drive interchanges with Highway 101.

Larkspur is strongly committed to seeing the interchanges improved.

Travel To and Between Retail Areas

Goal 12: Reduce the need for long distance and/or frequent shopping travel by private automobile.

This goal is consistent with those in other sections of the Plan, such as encouraging neighborhood-serving businesses and keeping the Downtown at a scale that will encourage people to walk or bike to the shops. Most of the policies and programs that would result in attaining this goal are in the Land Use chapter.

Policy z: Encourage means of travel to and between retail areas other than by private automobile.

Policy aa: Create stronger links between retail areas.

Policy ab: Reduce demand for parking at retail areas.

Action Program [15]: Explore the feasibility of providing a free shuttle service on one or more routes connecting Downtown, North Magnolia, Bon Air Shopping Center, Larkspur Landing, the Village in Corte Madera, and the Corte Madera Town Center.

Downtown Circulation

Goal 13: Enhance Downtown as a destination rather than as a corridor.

Magnolia Avenue currently serves the dual purpose of “Main Street” of Larkspur, and a through-route for traffic bypassing freeway congestion. Goal 13 is a land use goal that can be partially brought about by circulation policies. Policy “f” would contribute to attainment of this goal. In addition, the following policies and program specifically address Downtown policies.

Policy ac: Maintain adequate off-street parking Downtown.

Policy ad: Explore the use of *in lieu* fees, assessment districts, and other financing mechanisms to improve and increase the parking supply in Downtown Larkspur.

Action Program [16]: Explore the feasibility of requiring developers of Downtown property to provide off-site parking supplemented by shuttle bus service to Downtown.

Safety

This section covers transportation safety in Larkspur. The need for safe circulation must be recognized as a priority, even at the expense of traffic efficiency.

Goal 14: Reduce the number and severity of transportation-related accidents.

Goal 15: Provide good fire access and traffic safety in neighborhoods.

Policy ae: Place higher priority on safety as opposed to efficient traffic flow and speed.

Policy af: Identify streets that create a problem for fire or traffic safety.

Action Program [17]: Install stop signs, pedestrian cross walks, and other safety-related improvements as warranted.

Action Program [18]: Work with the County and State Prison to provide safer access and related improvements to the section of East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard frequented by persons engaged in surf-sailing. One or more of the following actions should be considered: a small paved area for short-term parking; prohibition of parking on the north side of Drake; and longer term parking near the entrance to San Quentin Prison. (See also Chapter 5, page 107, Policy “e” and Action Programs 7 and 8.)

Action Program [19]: Implement single-side-of-street parking regulations (to include signing and enforcement) where needed.

Circulation and Environmental Protection

Goal 16: Circulation improvements should not adversely affect the environment.

Policy ag: Ensure that transportation facilities do not impinge upon irreplaceable resources (such as Corte Madera Creek, the Bay and its shoreline, important open space lands, and recreational facilities).

Policy ah: Minimize air, water and noise pollution due to transportation.

Policy ai: Consider seismic and geotechnical factors in the planning, location, design, and construction of new transportation facilities.

Policy aj: Seek public participation in the preparation and execution of regional and local circulation plans.

Action Program [20]: Encourage removal of the NWPRR drawbridge over Corte Madera Creek, and the bridge abutments.

To carry transit, the bridge would be replaced by a modern span designed to preclude interference with water traffic, open space, and habitat.

Action Program [21]: Landscape new circulation facilities in harmony with the environment and safety considerations.

Implementing Circulation Improvements

Goal 17: Mitigate the traffic impacts of new developments.

Policy ak: Development should contribute to measures to mitigate local and regional traffic impacts.

Policy al: Developers should pay for improvements to the existing street system to mitigate unacceptable impacts where such improvements are appropriate.

Policy am: Improvements based on traffic mitigation are not to be considered the only way to reduce traffic impacts.

Action Program [22]: Continue to collect a traffic impact fee from developers to fund improvements.

Such improvements should include the traffic capacity measures described in the General Plan.

Action Program [23]: Develop programs to take advantage of any sales tax revenue for transportation improvements.

Action Program [24]: The City will use its traffic mitigation fees to carry out projects as soon as sufficient funds are received. □

Chapter 5. Community Facilities and Services

This chapter provides information about the level of public facilities and related services available in Larkspur now and in the future. “*Public facilities*” include parks, schools, and other public buildings. “*Related services*” are those that the facilities are designed to provide—recreation, education, child care, and general city government. An exception is fire and police services. These are covered in the Safety section of Chapter 7 while their facilities are covered here.

PARKS AND RECREATION

This section discusses Larkspur’s urban parks and their use for active recreation. It does not cover Larkspur’s 300-plus acres of publicly-owned open space, detailed discussion of which is reserved for Chapter 6, Environmental Resources.

1972 Master Plan

Larkspur adopted a *Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan* in 1972. The Master Plan notes that a major consideration for park planning in Larkspur is that most of its residential neighborhoods are in hillside areas. The hilly terrain makes it very difficult, both economically and environmentally, to provide parkland near to where people live. Because of the topographical constraints, the Master Plan said that school sites must serve as neighborhood parks and provide the large flat spaces needed for group and team sports such as baseball, softball, basketball, and soccer. Nevertheless, the Plan stated that individual lots should be acquired, wherever possible, in hillside and other areas, to provide mini-parks within walking distance of residents.

The City has carried out the policies in the Master Plan by acquiring seven new parks since 1972. The City is also maximizing the use of school sites to supplement City parks. Larkspur’s parks are well distributed considering the topography and opportunities for park acquisition and development.

Existing Parkland and Recreational Space

Larkspur has 51.3 acres of public parkland. This yields a public parkland-to-population ratio of 4.5 acres per thousand (based on an estimated 1989 population of 11,300). This is approximately 175 percent of the 1972 ratio of 2.6 acres per thousand. The 51.3 acres include two new mini-parks (Niven Park and Greenbrae School Park, each with 1.5 acres). It also includes the open areas of the closed Larkspur-Corte Madera School site—which remain in Larkspur School District ownership while used by the City. Not included in the 51.3 acres is 17 acres of community fields on the Redwood High School campus that are available to the public under certain conditions.

Additional recreational land accessible to the public can be found on school property besides Redwood High School. Henry C. Hall Middle School in Larkspur, and Bacich and Kent Schools in Kentfield, offer a variety of recreation facilities.

Figure 5-1 on the following page lists the parks and their acreages as well as the acreage of schools located in Larkspur. Figure 5-2 on page 97 shows the locations of those parks and schools.

The City of Larkspur offers a variety of recreation programs for all ages, from preschool to senior citizens, through its Recreation Department. The Department sponsors the Larkspur Larks, a senior citizen organization that meets twice a month for speakers, entertainment, picnics, and field trips. The Recreation Department also publishes a semi-annual newsletter describing the programs it offers. Through it the City not only invites the public to get involved in organizing and participating in recreational activities, but also solicits their involvement in civic affairs.

In a unique public/private partnership, Larkspur offers a special opportunity to learn and participate in rowing through the private Marin Rowing Club. The City of Larkspur has entered into a Joint Powers Agreement with the Club, enabling it to erect a club house and boat dock on City-owned property behind the Drake's Landing Office Center. In exchange for use of City-owned land, the Club will provide rowing lessons on Corte Madera Creek through the Larkspur Recreation Department.

Figure 5-1
Larkspur Parks and Recreational Facilities

Park	Size (Acres)	Facilities
<i>Bon Air Landing Park</i>	0.75	Fishing dock, sitting area, and picnic facilities.
<i>Dolliver Park</i>	2.5	Tot lot equipment, picnic facilities, and rest rooms.
<i>Hamilton Park</i>	0.33	Sitting area and picnic facilities.
<i>Heatherwood Park</i>	0.75	Play equipment and picnic facilities.
<i>Neighborhood Park</i>	2.0	Picnic tables. Remillard Cooperative Day Care Center is also located here.
<i>Remillard Park</i>	7.0	Fresh water marsh, wild life sanctuary, picnic tables, beach, and Bay fishing.
<i>Miwok Park</i>	8.0	Tubb Lake, a valued fresh water pond, is located here. A biological study is needed. The park is undeveloped.
<i>Larkspur-Corte Madera School</i>	5.0	Tennis courts, hard court, mini-basketball facilities, picnic tables, and a Little League baseball field. Also, children's play apparatus owned by private school tenant.
<i>Greenbrae School Park</i>	1.5	Tot lot, mini-basketball facilities, and benches.
<i>Niven Park</i>	1.5	Planned improvements include a tot lot, turf area, a walkway, and benches.
<i>Piper Park</i>	22.0	Tennis courts, picnic facilities, softball and soccer/cricket fields, volleyball facilities, a fitness course, a fishing dock, horseshoe pits, rest rooms, a community garden, and a dog park. Parking is also available on site.
<i>Hall Middle School</i>	9.0	Basketball court and asphalt and turf play area.
<i>Redwood High School</i>	60.0	A gymnasium, football field, two baseball fields, a swimming pool, a court games facility, and tennis courts have restricted access; 17 acres consisting of a baseball field, three softball fields, and a soccer field are conditionally available for public use.

SCHOOLS SERVING LARKSPUR

Four public school districts serve Larkspur.¹ The Larkspur School District provides primary education in the area generally south of Corte Madera Creek. Primary students living north of the creek and in the Murray Park neighborhood are in the Kentfield School District; students living north of the creek and east of 101 (the San Quentin Peninsula including Larkspur Landing) are served by the San Rafael City School District. Most secondary students in Larkspur are in the Tamalpais Union High School District, but those living on the San Quentin Peninsula are in the San Rafael City School District. Figure 5-3 on page 98 shows the boundaries of the elementary school districts serving Larkspur and its Sphere of Influence.

Larkspur children in the Larkspur School District attend Neil Cummins Elementary School (grades K–5) located in Corte Madera, and Henry C. Hall Middle School (grades 6–8) on Doherty Drive next to Piper Park. Larkspur children in the Kentfield School District attend Anthony Bacich School (grades K–5) in Kentfield and Kent School (grades 6–8) near the College of Marin. Larkspur children in the San Rafael School District attend Bahia Vista Elementary School (grades K–5), Davidson Middle School (grades 6–8), and San Rafael High School (grades 9–12).

Larkspur students in grades 9-12 attend Redwood or San Rafael high schools or one of two alternative high schools operated by the Tamalpais Union High School District on the Redwood High campus. The two alternative high schools are San Andreas School, an opportunity school for students who may benefit from a non-traditional high school; and Mewah Mountain High School, a continuing education program for students who have returned to school after taking time off. Students at San Andreas and Mewah schools come from throughout the district.

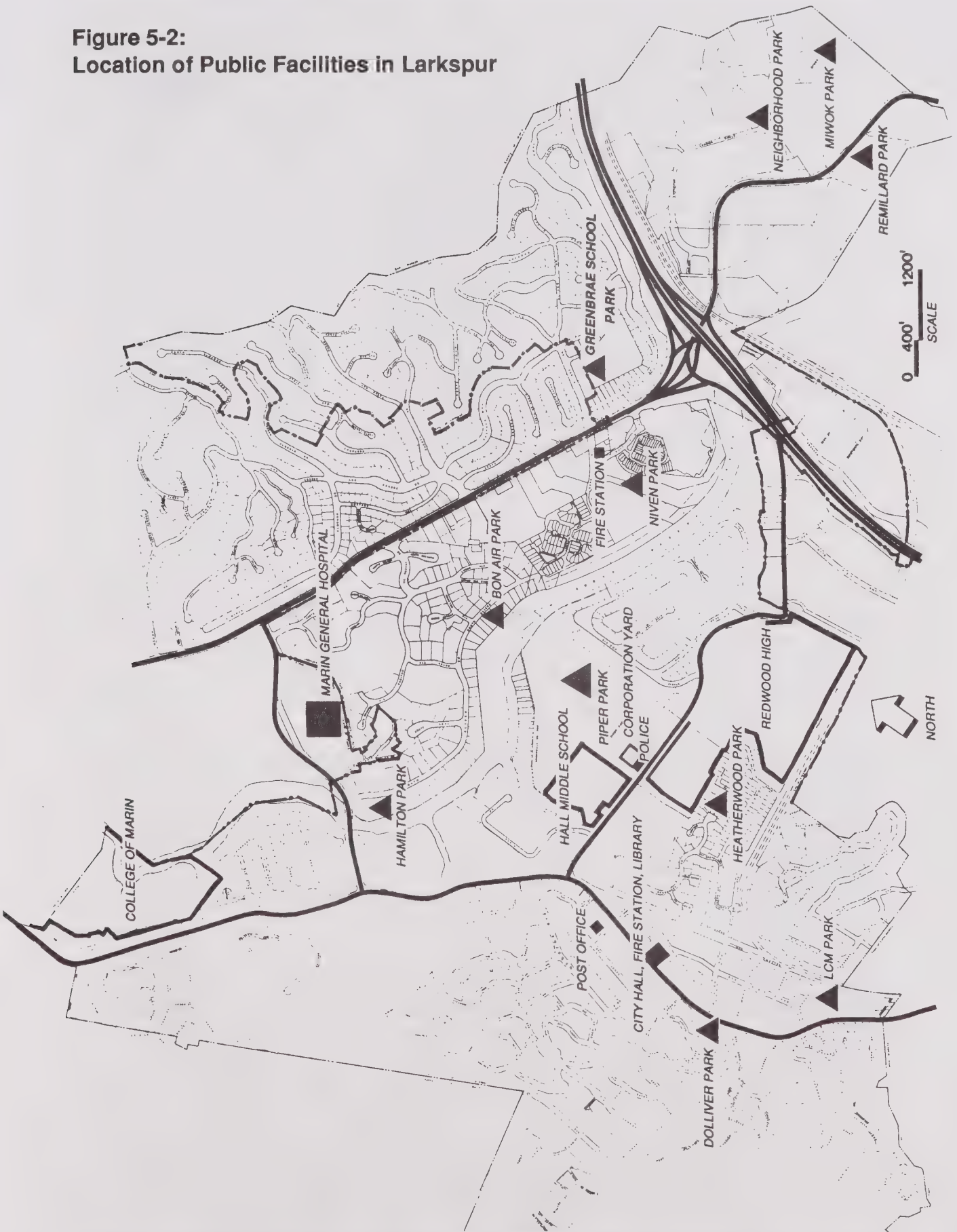
There are two private schools in Larkspur for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Marin Primary had a 1988–89 enrollment of 93.² St. Patrick's School enrolled 267 students during the 1988-89 academic year.³ There are no private high schools in Larkspur. However, Marin Catholic High School—located just outside the Larkspur city limits on Bon Air Drive at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard—had an enrollment of 800 students in 1988–89.

¹ College of Marin is described under "OTHER PUBLIC BUILDINGS," page 104.

² *Statistical Bulletin No. 6*, Marin County Office of Education, February 1, 1989.

³ *Ibid.*

Figure 5-2:
Location of Public Facilities in Larkspur



**Figure 5-3:
Elementary School Districts**



Enrollment Trends

The Larkspur School District and Tamalpais Union High School District have both experienced significant decreases in enrollment. These changes reflect both national trends and local conditions.

The U.S. Census Bureau reported in May 1989 that "in recent years total births have begun to creep up again, largely because the 'Baby Boom' generation is in its prime child-bearing years."⁴ While this trend is somewhat evident in Larkspur area schools, it was the new residential development that was expected, until recently, to contribute most of the growth in the district. However, the Marin Municipal Water District moratorium on future connections to the water system will slow residential growth, at least until new sources of water are found. (See Water Conservation and Water Quality, page 120.) Against this backdrop of uncertainty regarding new development, the following is a discussion of enrollment trends at the schools attended by most Larkspur students.

Larkspur Area Enrollment

Enrollment at Redwood High School has declined dramatically since 1975 when the school had 2,629 students. The school is functioning at less than half its 2,623 capacity, with 1,081 students enrolled in Fall 1989. Consequently, the Tamalpais Union High School District offices, which are on the same site, were relocated to a Redwood High School classroom building during the summer of 1989.

Use of the former District office building for non-school purposes is restricted to "conditional" uses allowed under the R-1 zoning classification. Conditional uses allowed with a use permit are colleges and schools, churches, community club houses, nursery schools, child care, public utility or public service uses, rest homes, and homes for exceptional children. In 1989, the tenant was "New Perspectives," a public service organization providing drug counseling services to youths.⁵

According to school district projections, enrollment at Redwood and San Rafael high schools will continue to decrease until 1991, and then will start to increase. (See Figure 5-4 on the page 101.) Redwood High is projected to have 200 more students (16 percent) in 1996 than in 1988.⁶ San Rafael High is also expected to gain, but will still have 200 fewer students in 1994 than it did in 1984.

⁴ "Average Household Shrinking," *Peninsula Times Tribune*, May 5, 1989, page A-13.

⁵ Communication with Jan Vasquez, Planning Department, City of Larkspur, August 11, 1989.

⁶ *Eight-year Enrollment Projections*, Tamalpais Union High School District, Fall 1987.

Enrollment at San Andreas High and Mewah Mountain High alternative schools has also declined. San Andreas High enrolled 95 students in 1985, and 76 in 1989. Enrollment at Mewah was 66 in 1989.

In the summer of 1989, voters in the Tamalpais Union High School District approved a measure to impose a \$98 special tax on property owners. The tax will be levied annually over eight years to maintain and reinstate academic and extra-curricular programs. Revenue from the special tax will also be used to finance maintenance of school district facilities. The Redwood campus is one of three in the district that will benefit from the special tax.

Because of (1) the special tax, (2) rising enrollments at area elementary schools, and (3) the relocation of the District offices to Redwood High School, District officials do not anticipate that a high school will have to be closed in the foreseeable future.

Hall Middle School has experienced fewer dramatic drops in enrollment and some upswings; nevertheless, a drop of 30 percent has occurred since 1982 when enrollment was 336.⁷ Projections for Hall show a decrease in enrollment in 1990 followed by modest increases in 1992 and 1993, to return to the 1988 level.⁸ (See Figure 5-5 on the following page.)

Declining enrollment forced the Larkspur-Corte Madera School to close in 1979. The Larkspur School District uses some of the buildings for offices, and the rest are leased to a private school (Marin Primary). Recently, kindergarten enrollment in the Larkspur school district has rebounded. Enrollment projections anticipated a continuing increase, but the moratorium on water hook-ups will preclude the new housing development that would have provided some school-age children.

Kentfield School District enrollment is increasing. Enrollment for the 1987–88 school year was 671.⁹ The following year (1988–89) the District increased by 39 students, and by 1989–90, had reached an enrollment of 803, a 20 percent increase over 1987–88. The enrollment increase is concentrated in grades K–4, reflecting population growth in the Kentfield/Greenbrae area.

⁷ *Revised Chart B, Larkspur School District Enrollment Projections, 1988.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Kentfield School District Enrollment, 1988–89, February 3, 1989.*

Figure 5-4: Redwood High School Enrollment

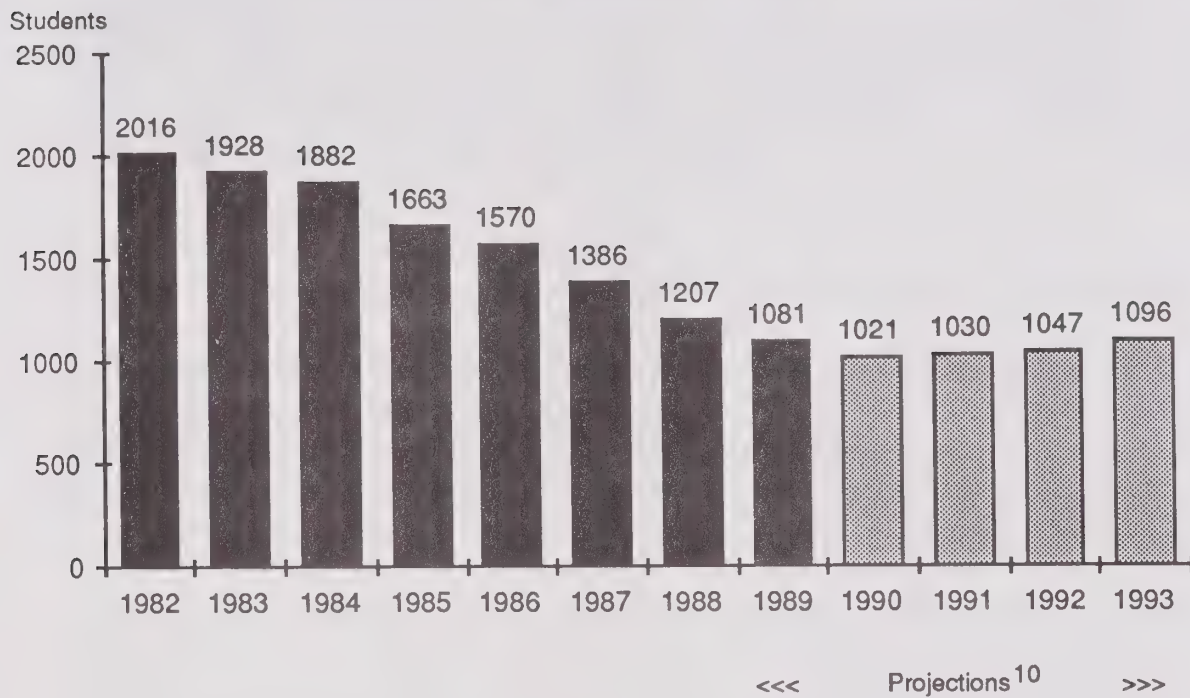
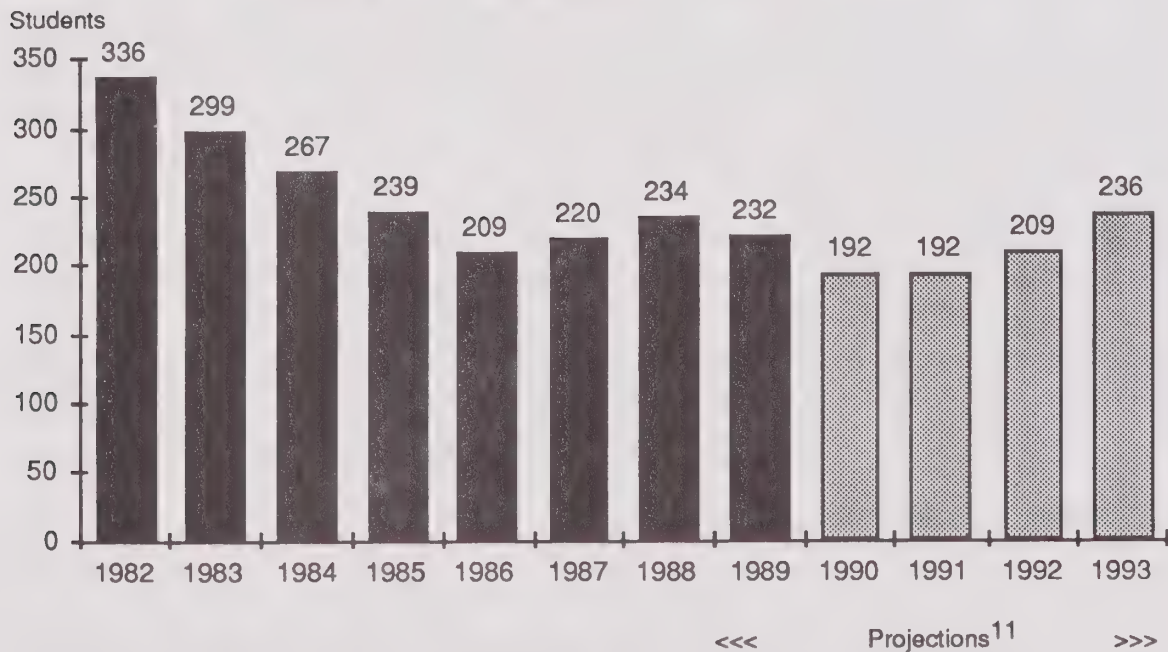


Figure 5-5: Hall Middle School Enrollment



¹⁰ *Eight-year Enrollment Projections*, Tamalpais Union High School District, Fall 1987.

¹¹ *Revised Chart B*, Larkspur School District Enrollment Projections, 1988.

Enrollment at Marin Primary and St. Patrick's in Larkspur has grown progressively from 1979 through the 1987–88 academic year. Marin Primary has more than tripled its 1979 enrollment, while St. Patrick's has grown by 23 percent over the period.¹² On the other hand, Marin Catholic High School's enrollment has decreased since 1985. In 1984–85, Marin Catholic had 892 students.¹³ In 1989–90, enrollment was 730, an 18 percent drop from 1985.

CHILD CARE FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Many families with working parents rely on child care services within Larkspur. Child care can be informal (a hired babysitter) or formal (a licensed family day care provider or day care center). All ages, ranging from infants through elementary school children, need child care. Working parents need day care services for the entire day and throughout the year.

The City of Larkspur has operated a child care program for the Larkspur School District for 15 years. The center is located at Neil Cummins School. The City provides a portable classroom and the child care staff. A second portable purchased in the summer of 1989 allows the child care program at the school to serve 100 children.

Child care services offered at Neil Cummins School include a preschool program (for ages 3½ to 5) Monday–Friday until noon, with extended care available until 2:30 PM. A before-and-after-school program is available for children in grades K–5. User fees pay all costs associated with the service.

There are two private day care centers in Larkspur—the Children's Cottage Co-op located in Neighborhood Park on Larkspur Landing Circle, and Marin Primary at Larkspur-Corte Madera School—and three in Kentfield. In addition, day care homes provide care for six or fewer children. Project Care for Children, a countywide child care referral and advocacy agency in San Rafael, provides referral services for Larkspur and other Marin County cities.

LARKSPUR PUBLIC FACILITIES

Police

In 1980, Larkspur and Corte Madera merged police services into a consolidated Twin Cities Police Department. The Department currently has two offices: One

¹² *Statistical Bulletin No. 6*, Marin County Office of Education, February 1, 1989.

¹³ *Ibid.*

is located in Larkspur on Doherty Drive next to Piper Park (see Figure 5-2, page 97) and the other is in Corte Madera at Town Park on Tamalpais Drive. The Larkspur office is used primarily for dispatch, patrol operations, and executive offices. It contains the Emergency Operations Center, which is activated during emergencies. The Corte Madera office is mainly used for juvenile services and administration.

The separation of police administrative services into two locations creates two problems. One concerns information storage and retrieval. Materials and confidential documents must be transmitted by hand—which the police consider to be costly and time-consuming—or via facsimile, which is considered risky. The second problem concerns day-to-day personal interaction: Decisions and events at one station sometimes occur without the knowledge or input of personnel at the other station. The Department is therefore considering a single, central location.

Fire

The Larkspur Fire Department provides fire and medical emergency service to the City of Larkspur from two stations. Station #1 is next to City Hall, and Station #2 is located just off Sir Francis Drake Boulevard in the Bon Air-Drake's Landing area. The two stations are adequate to meet present and future demand for fire and medical emergency services since the City is substantially developed.

Fire Station #2 was demolished and replaced on the same site with a new station in 1990. The new station is designed in two modular sections, one for an engine room, the other for an office/living unit.

Fire Station #1 is scheduled to undergo extensive rehabilitation, including structural repairs to bring the station up to seismic safety requirements, and redesign to better accommodate its use as a fire station.

City Hall

City Hall is a Mission Revival style building completed in 1913. It houses the City library and all City offices except that of the Fire Chief and the Building Inspection Department, which are located next door in Fire Station #1, and the Police Department (discussed earlier). Like Fire Station #1, it also is undergoing rehabilitation.

Corporation Yard

The City's corporation yard is located on a half-acre behind the police building in Piper Park. Public Works repair and maintenance personnel are headquartered at the yard, which has several buildings in which to store tools and vehicles.

OTHER PUBLIC BUILDINGS

College of Marin

The College of Marin, Kentfield campus, is a community college located on 66 acres straddling the boundary between Larkspur and unincorporated Kentfield. It was established in 1926 with 40 students when the Kent family granted some of its farmland for a college. The Kentfield campus enrollment is 6,500 students in the daytime and 8,500 at night. Some 275 faculty and staff are employed there.

Construction of new buildings is unlikely. Enrollment swelled to 12,000–14,000 students during the 1960s, overcrowding existing facilities and requiring the erection of temporary facilities, most of which have since been removed. Although the College has grown by 3–5 percent annually over the past four years, officials anticipate that enrollment will level off, given county population trends. Also, the College has renovated its permanent buildings so that they may be used more efficiently. Offices previously located in the temporary buildings have moved to the permanent space. Six temporary structures have been removed, and the remaining four are scheduled to be removed by 1991. College officials note that there is a shortage of on-campus parking and that the grounds where the temporary buildings were located are being used for parking.

The Larkspur portion of the campus is largely open space, consisting of athletic playfields, marshland, and a former classroom. Under zoning approved by the City of Larkspur in 1988, the College cannot use this 26-acre portion of the campus for anything except educational and environmental purposes (*e.g.*, playfields and classrooms).

Marin General Hospital

Marin General Hospital is located just outside Larkspur's northwestern City Limits on the southeast side of Bon Air Road. It is surrounded by Larkspur on three sides. The 235-bed hospital is operated by the Marin Hospital District which covers all of Marin County. The hospital opened in 1952 and has just

undergone a major modernization project to update surgery, coronary and intensive care, and orthopedic nursing facilities. A new wing was built, but no new beds were added. Road and parking improvements were a part of the project. The hospital employs about 1,100 full- and part-time employees (or 800–850 full-time equivalents).

San Quentin Prison

San Quentin Prison is a 432-acre facility east of Larkspur within the City's Sphere of Influence. A large part of the prison property is open land, with major facilities and parking located close to the San Francisco Bay shoreline. The prison employs 1,300 people and has a payroll of \$67 million a year. It housed 3,900 inmates in 1989.

San Quentin underwent a \$28 million renovation in 1989, in which it was converted from a facility for maximum security prisoners to one for medium security prisoners (prisoners entering the system for the first time and parole violators). There are no plans for its closure. Indeed, as of 1990, although there are no "final numbers," the State plans to expand the facility by at least 2,600 beds for the Department of Corrections, and another 300 beds for the County. The expansion would be completed in 1993.¹⁴ The total number of inmates would be 6,800, a 175 percent increase over present occupancy.

Post Office

The U.S. Post Office serving Larkspur is on Ward Street in downtown Larkspur. The Post Office has operated from its present 1,900-square foot building for 30 years. The building is owned by the owner of the Blue Rock Inn, which—as of 1990—was for sale. If the Blue Rock Inn is sold, the Post Office expects to negotiate a new lease with the new owner, since the facility is adequate to handle the retail traffic.¹⁵

The Larkspur Post Office serves primarily as a post office box station (with 640 box holders) and retail customer service facility, but there is no on-site customer parking. The Larkspur Post Office has only a three-person staff, but for a facility of its size does a lot of business—approximately \$1,500,000 per year whereas \$250,000 would be normal. That is because the facility is centrally located, and other surrounding post offices (San Rafael, Kentfield, Corte Madera, Mill Valley,

¹⁴ Communication with Vernell Crittendon, Warden's Administrative Assistant, San Quentin State Prison, October 4, 1990.

¹⁵ Communication with Dan Navarrette, Acting Director of Field Operations, North Bay Post Office, October 4, 1990.

and Sausalito) are equally busy or busier.¹⁶ Mail delivery to Larkspur residents living generally south of the creek is from the Corte Madera Post Office, and delivery to residents living generally north of the creek is from the San Rafael Post Office.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES GOALS, POLICIES, & PROGRAMS

This section contains the Larkspur General Plan Goals, Policies, and Programs pertaining to all public facilities and certain public services in Larkspur and its Sphere of Influence.

Parks and Recreation

Goal 1: Provide park facilities and recreation programs for all age groups.

Policy a: When appropriate, continue to acquire individual lots for mini-parks.

Action Program [1]: Update the City's "Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan."

Action Program [2]: Identify potential park sites that could be acquired either as a condition of development approval or as park development opportunities that may someday arise.

Policy b: Continue to maintain Piper Park as a recreation area with a balance of organized play facilities and natural areas.

Policy c: Seek to meet the park and recreation needs of children of all ages, from toddlers to teenagers, in a variety of locations.

Action Program [3]: Provide "tot lots" with safe and imaginative play equipment where space is available in City parks.

Action Program [4]: Explore providing a teen/preteen center.

Policy d: The City encourages programs and recreation facilities for seniors.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Action Program [5]: Work with the Larkspur Larks, the Larkspur Recreation Department, and Marin County Older Adult Services and similar groups to identify the available programs and facilities for seniors, and look for ways to augment them where appropriate.

Action Program [6]: Utilize seniors as community resources and maximize use of their expertise, talents, and time for benefit of the community.

Policy e: Work with the County and the State to limit the development of Remillard Park and to enhance the safety of windsurfers, boaters, and other users of the beach between Remillard Park and San Quentin Prison.

Action Program [7]: Work with the Golden Gate Transit District and other responsible jurisdictions to delineate travel lanes for ferries and safe areas for windsurfers. (Cf. EIR, page F-62.)

Action Program [8]: Provide restrooms for windsurfers, boaters, and other users of the beach between Remillard Park and San Quentin Prison.

At present, the strip of beach between Remillard Park and San Quentin Prison is heavily used by windsurfers. Upwards of 60 cars may be parked on the shoulders on both sides of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard at peak times. While developing this site as a public facility would be desirable, there are inherent problems. One is the difficulty of providing safe, off-road parking. The second is that the windsurfers sail in the same area as the Golden Gate ferries that ply to and from the Larkspur Ferry Terminal. This conflict could worsen if newer, high-speed catamarans replace the ferries currently in use. The dilemma is whether to improve the currently unsafe conditions on land (which may lead to an increase in water sport activity and a consequent increase in danger on the water) or to leave the land conditions as they are.

Policy f: Cooperate with neighboring communities, public agencies, and school districts to provide recreational facilities and programs to Larkspur residents.

If San Quentin Prison ever closes, its Bay frontage should remain in open space and parkland.

Policy g: Work with the school districts in Larkspur to expand community use of their facilities during non-school hours.

Action Program [9]: Establish liaison between senior citizens and the schools to provide access to buildings for senior citizen educational opportunities.

Action Program [10]: Look into joint powers agreements that enable the City to make public use of school sites in return for the City maintaining them.

Action Program [11]: Work with school districts to see that school playing fields, gymnasiums, meeting halls, and auditoriums are retained for public use even though school buildings may be leased for other than public school purposes.

Action Programs 9, 10, and 11 will promote the use of school facilities for park and recreation purposes and maintain them in public ownership. Their focus is on property that remains in District ownership but may be either used or leased out by a school district for non-school but public recreational and cultural purposes. The net result of these Action Programs is to benefit both the City (by providing community facilities) and the school districts (by providing them with lease revenues or City maintenance services). See also Policies “h” through “l” and Action Programs 12 and 13 below.

Schools

Goal 2: Preserve all existing school sites for future public use, with school use having the highest priority.

Policy h: Encourage school districts not to sell school sites, but to preserve them for community and future school use.

Policy i: Look for ways to ease the financial burden on the school districts so that school sites can be retained in public ownership.

Action Program [12]: Work with the school districts to examine alternatives to school closure and sale early in the process of responding to declining school enrollments.

Policy j: When school districts apply for interim reuse of surplus facilities, the City encourages that school playing fields, gymnasiums, meeting halls, and auditoriums be retained for public use.

In summary, Goal 2 and its policies and action programs will allow non-school uses in some or all of the school buildings—uses that would be compatible with the neighboring areas—in exchange for (1) retention of the school sites in District ownership, and (2) use of the schools' cultural and recreational facilities by the public.

Goal 3: Achieve greater cooperation between the City and the school districts in sharing resources.

Policy k: Encourage school boards to work with Larkspur and recreation departments of other cities to expand community use of school facilities (pools, gyms) during non-school hours.

Policy l: Encourage school districts to make use of public safety and other City staff members to teach students about fire prevention, CPR, drug abuse, bicycle safety, and other subjects.

Action Program [13]: Identify City staff, facilities, and programs that can be shared with the school districts for educational purposes.

For example, the City Library is used by students from St. Patrick's School and could be used by students from other schools, if appropriate.

Child Care

Goal 4: Ensure that quality child care is available to Larkspur children.

Policy m: Cooperate with the Larkspur School District in operating a child care program.

Policy n: The City encourages continued operation of a child care center serving up to 100 children at Neil Cummins School or any other suitable site.

Public Facilities

Goal 5: Provide for a higher level of public use (cultural and recreational activities, community meetings) of public buildings and lands.

Policy o: Consolidate like functions (for example, corporation yards) of several public agencies on one site.

This would make some existing corporation yards available for sale or other public use.

Action Program [14]: Investigate the feasibility of consolidating Larkspur's corporation yard with that of another public agency, and moving it from Piper Park.

Action Program [15]: When designing new public buildings, accommodate multiple uses (for example, a youth/senior center in a new community building). Cf. Action Program 4, page 106.

Goal 6: Renovate and modify public buildings to meet future demands.

Policy p: Renovate public buildings to conform to seismic safety requirements, space needs, and use of new technology, while respecting historic values.

Action Program [16]: Rehabilitate City Hall and Fire Station #1 in accordance with structural and design studies.

In 1990 City Hall was 76 years old and Fire Station #1 was 52 years old. Both are in need of structural and other improvements, and engineering studies have been completed. Architectural plans have been prepared for remodeling the fire station, and a space study of City Hall was being contemplated in 1990.

Action Program [17]: Explore the relocation of Fire Station #1 to allow potential future expansion of city services such as planning, library, recreation, etc., in the existing historic building.

Policy q: Coordinate with the Town of Corte Madera to consolidate the two existing police stations of the Twin Cities Police Department at one location.

Action Program [18]: Survey potential sites, and study the financing and timing for development of a single police station.

Action Program [19]: Consider moving the current police facility to a location other than Piper Park. □

Chapter 6. Environmental Resources

This chapter covers open space and conservation as prescribed by Government Code sections 65302(e) and 65302(d), respectively. It addresses open space and preservation of the natural environment; water conservation and water quality; and waste recycling.

OPEN SPACE

State Government Code Section 65560 defines *open space land* as “any parcel of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purposes of: (1) preservation of natural resources; (2) managed production of resources; (3) outdoor recreation; and (4) public health and safety.” In Larkspur, the primary purposes of open space lands are resource preservation, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, and community separation.

Preservation and enhancement of the biological diversity of plants and animals within the urban environment is important in an area with significant ecological resources. Larkspur’s open space lands are diverse. They include hillsides and ridges; riparian, marsh, and shoreline areas; and an abandoned railroad right-of-way. The City values the native habitat resources within Larkspur and continues to implement policies designed for their protection.

Hillsides and Ridges

Corte Madera Ridge, forming the city’s south and western boundary, and *Southern Heights Ridge*, forming the city’s northern boundary, define Larkspur’s urban form and separate it from other communities.¹ Corte Madera Ridge in particular, with Big and Little King Mountains standing out in the foreground, is a symbol of the community.

Corte Madera Ridge lies on the northeastern slopes of Mount Tamalpais. The ridge, and Blithedale Summit to the south, make up the 1,000-acre Northridge Open Space Preserve owned by the Marin County Open Space District. About 260 acres of the preserve are within Larkspur, including the newly-acquired 14-acre parcel at the upper end of Piedmont Road.

¹ Ridge names are USGS nomenclature.

The Northridge Open Space Preserve includes shaded canyons and open wind-blown hillsides. Woodlands (oaks, madrone, bay, buckeye, and redwoods) are interspersed with dense stands of chaparral (chamise, chaparral oak, manzanita, bush monkeyflower, coyote brush, and toyon) and annual grasslands. There are both native and introduced grasses.²

The vegetation is home to many species of wildlife, from western fence lizards and gopher snakes to deer, fox, bobcat, and coyote. Trees in the woodland provide nesting and perching sites for numerous bird species—jays, red-tailed hawks, great horned owls, and others. There are no known rare or endangered species on the Northridge property. However, the spotted owl is on the California Department of Fish and Game list of Bird Species of Special Concern.³

(The Marin County Audubon Society has counted between 71 and 90 different species of birds in Larkspur during its annual Christmas bird counts from 1978 to 1988. The Christmas Count area includes Corte Madera Creek from Highway 101 to the College of Marin bridge and adjacent upland areas, including King Mountain and various neighborhoods.⁴)

Most of the land on the slopes of Corte Madera Ridge that is not in the open space preserve is developed with single and multiple-family housing. An exception is the Tiscornia Estate—a 300-plus-acre holding on and around King Mountain and Little King Mountain. A large part of the Tiscornia Estate is in unincorporated Marin County. About 160 acres on King Mountain is proposed to be divided into four large single-family lots with 125 acres of it reserved in a scenic open space easement. About 76 acres in Larkspur and a similar amount in the County (at the upper end of Baltimore Canyon) are being added to the Northridge Preserve. As of September 1990, the Marin County Open Space District had the property in escrow. About 30 acres on the lower slopes (including the former Escalle Winery) is designated for Low Density Residential.

Both the publicly and privately-owned lands on Corte Madera Ridge are easily accessible from several residential neighborhoods and are used by hikers and joggers.

Southern Heights Ridge separates Larkspur from San Rafael. West of Highway 101, the south-facing hillside has been developed with the single-family homes of the Greenbrae neighborhood. Although landscaping is extensive, the area cannot be defined as open space except to the extent that it is an important visual backdrop to the community. A plant called the White Rayed Pentachaeta

² *King Mountain Estates Draft Environmental Impact Report*, April 5, 1989.

³ *Northridge Wildlife Survey*, Mitchell Katzel, Mill Valley, February 18, 1989.

⁴ Marin Audubon Society, Mill Valley.

found on the slopes of the hill has been designated as a candidate for the federal list of threatened species.

Southern Heights Ridge continues east across Highway 101 where it forms the spine of the San Quentin Peninsula. The ridge drops off steeply into the old rock quarry, now developed with housing. The top of the ridge (about 20 acres within Larkspur) was set aside as open space as a condition of development approval for the Larkspur Landing and Lincoln Terraces development.

Except for grass, the ridgeline is quite barren. It is a landmark visible from all directions.

Besides the hillside open space areas within Larkspur, the community greatly benefits from its proximity to Mount Tamalpais State Park and Marin Municipal Water District watershed lands, which are open to public use. The total acreage in recreation and open space use in Marin quadrupled between 1970 and 1990. Together, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, the Point Reyes National Seashore, the state parks, the Marin Municipal and North Marin County Water District watershed lands, and the Open Space District lands comprise approximately 150,000 acres.⁵

Shoreline and Marsh Areas

Corte Madera Creek, although substantially channelized, once flowed through a wide valley of tidal marshes. The creek still remains as the major open space resource in Larkspur's flatlands. Before urbanization, these marshes extended from Magnolia Avenue on the south to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard on the north (with the exception of Bon Air Hill). The creek's natural character has been greatly altered by the Army Corps of Engineers flood control project, and by private development. All that remains of the marshes is a narrow fringe along segments of the creek edge, and small areas preserved at the College of Marin, Piper Park, Redwood High School, the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, and Remillard Park.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service classifies most of the marshes as *estuarine*, or *tidal* wetlands, because the waters have some access to the Bay.⁶ The marshes along the southeasterly boundary of Redwood High School, at the

⁵ *Marin Countywide Plan, Parks and Recreation Element*, Draft, October 1988.

⁶ *The California General Plan Glossary* (The California Planning Roundtable, 1990) defines "wetlands" as "Transitional areas between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is covered by shallow water." Under a "unified" methodology now used by all federal agencies, wetlands are defined as those areas meeting certain criteria for hydrology, vegetation, and soils.

College of Marin, and at Remillard Park are classified as *palustrine*, or *nontidal* wetlands—cut off from tidal action.

The wetlands contain a variety of marsh vegetation. One plant, cordgrass, is the most productive in its yield per acre of any grass food known. It also produces more oxygen by photosynthesis than any other vascular plant. Another plant found along Corte Madera Creek, the Marin knotweed, is a preeminent, extremely rare, endangered, and unprotected species, according to the California Department of Fish and Game. Corte Madera Creek is one of only two known locations where the knotweed still exists.⁷

Salt marshes support a great diversity of animals ranging from small invertebrates to large vertebrates such as great blue herons. Fish graze the marshes at high tide and are in turn eaten by birds. The marsh vegetation provides nest sites and food sources for song birds and rodents.⁸

The marshes of the San Francisco Bay and the waters of Corte Madera Creek provide an important over-wintering habitat for migratory species of the Pacific Flyway. In the fall, migrating waterfowl and shorebirds by the hundreds of thousands arrive from the north to rest and feed before resuming their flights southward to Mexico and Central and South America. In spring, waves of shorebirds are seen once again as they return. The northward migration is not as populous, as many of the birds choose to return through the Central Valley.

Three special status species have been sighted near the creek in Larkspur, although not in recent years—the California clapper rail, the California black rail, and the salt marsh harvest mouse. The clapper rail and salt marsh harvest mouse are listed as endangered by both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game.

Balance Between Recreational Uses and Protecting Natural Vegetation and Wildlife

In recent years, Larkspur has aggressively fought to preserve its few remaining marshes. The City has also sought to retain the recreational aspects of the creekside environment by establishing bike and pedestrian paths along some segments. The City recognizes that creekside improvements may encourage human intrusion into areas of the creek that sustain important habitat for wildlife. Therefore, the provision of recreation facilities in areas with critical ecological resources is balanced with a sensitivity to protecting wildlife habitat, wildlife species, and remnants of native riparian vegetation.

⁷ *Creekside Supplemental Environmental Impact Report*, September 1987.

⁸ *Ibid.*

Water Quality

Intermittent or continually running water distinguishes rivers and streams. Streams originate as outlets of ponds or lakes, or from springs, seepage, or seasonal runoff. Riparian streams and creeks represent a rare habitat type, affected by the availability and quality of their water. The quality of water in streams, creeks, ponds, and other surface bodies can be affected by erosion, sedimentation, and runoff. Naturally occurring processes, such as erosion, can be accelerated by human actions. Excessive grading, removal of vegetation, and construction adjacent to stream banks can hasten the natural erosion process, resulting in the rapid loss of soil from the land and high levels of sediment in surface water bodies. The sediment in rapidly moving water undercuts stream banks, while slower moving waters deposit silt. The potential for erosion occurs primarily along natural channel banks that have not been altered by flood control projects.

Another source of surface water pollution is contaminated surface runoff. Surface runoff typically contains contaminants such as oil and grease from driveways, parking lots, and streets, sediment from construction sites, litter, animal waste, pesticides, lead from auto exhausts, and yard waste.

San Francisco Bay

Larkspur only has about one-half mile of direct Bay frontage—from the Larkspur Landing pedestrian bridge to the eastern end of Remillard Park. The shoreline is designated either Open Space or Parkland and there is no potential for development. The Bay frontage beyond Remillard Park is outside the City Limits and within the boundaries of San Quentin Prison, except for a small beach between the park and the prison boundaries. Wind surfers launch their craft from the beach. (See Policy “e” and Action Programs 7 and 8, and discussion of this site in Chapter 5, Public Facilities and Services, page 107) Other than at the beach, access to the Bay is difficult. The shoreline is rocky and narrow, and it is unsafe to stop a car along busy Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, which parallels the Bay front. A paved bike/pedestrian path does provide access to views of the Bay and the hills beyond.

The wave action from boats approaching the Larkspur Ferry Terminal has caused some shoreline erosion. Ferries now reduce their speeds as they approach and leave the terminal, mitigating the problem.

Railroad Right-of-Way

The former Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way paralleling Holcomb and William Avenues and the Redwood High School marsh is also a valuable urban open space area. Since abandonment of the line for railroad use, the property has become overgrown with blackberries, native willow, wild rose, broom, and acacias. It is used informally for biking, walking, and play. Any new development should provide for a permanent bicycle/pedestrian path to replace the existing informal path. As of October 1990, a citizens' group was working to acquire this land for open space.

Parks

Larkspur's parks are discussed in Chapter 5, Community Facilities and Services, pages 93–95. However, three City parks are unique in that they serve more than recreational purposes. Piper Park, Remillard Park, and Miwok Park each contain protected marshes and natural areas. The marshes at Piper and Remillard Parks are discussed above.

Miwok Park on the slopes of the San Quentin Peninsula contains a manmade reservoir, Tubb Lake, that has become a valuable biologic study resource for the community. Tubb Lake is in need of dredging, and its cattails should be cleared. The dam should also be assessed for stability. Lands adjacent to the park which are designated for residential development could have an impact on the Tubb Lake watershed the natural character of the park. There is an existing lease at the park. It is crucial to enhance Tubb Lake and the surrounding park to make it a functional public facility.

Open Space Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goal 1: **Preserve and enhance a variety of open space features including ridgelines, the wetlands along the Bay and the creeks, wildlife habitats, view corridors, and other amenities which contribute to a sense of openness in Larkspur.**

Goal 2: **Maintain Corte Madera and Southern Heights Ridges as community separators.**

Policy a: **Work with local and regional open space agencies and interest groups to develop an open space preservation strategy.**

Action Program [1]: Map and rank open space features as to their value to the community.

Action Program [2]: Support the efforts of the Marin County Open Space District to acquire more open space in the Larkspur Sphere of Influence.

Action Program [3] Identify financing mechanisms to acquire privately held lands designated for future open space.

Action Program [4]: Educate school children and the general public about Larkspur's open space resources.

Policy b: Designate and preserve in open space the areas so shown on the General Plan Land Use map. They include Those portions of the Northridge that are above the 350-foot elevation, Baltimore canyon, the Piedmont and Redwood Avenue areas, Big and Little King Mountains and their saddle area, the Tubb Lake watershed, and the ridge above the old quarries on the San Quentin Peninsula.

Policy c: Designate and preserve in Shoreline/Marsh Conservation area the wetlands along Corte Madera Creek and at Piper Park, Redwood High School, and the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, and the shoreline between East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and the Bay waters.

Action Program [5]: Rezone publicly-owned or dedicated open space areas to appropriate zone districts that indicate that their potential for development has been eliminated.

The Land Use and Circulation Plan designates the areas listed in Policies "b" and "c" as Open Space, Shoreline/Marsh Conservation, or Parkland. Most of these areas are in public ownership or are required to remain in open space as conditions of development approval. However, except for the parkland, the underlying zoning suggests there is potential for development (*e.g.*, the Northridge Preserve is zoned RMP, Residential Master Plan). In areas where the potential for development has been eliminated, the zoning should reflect a commitment to keeping the land open.

In the few remaining areas where development is allowed, Policies d–f and Action Programs 6–10 apply:

Policy d: Allow low-intensity development on hillsides and near Corte Madera Creek only if the design preserves natural features, such as significant stands of trees, forested hillsides, riparian vegetation, marshlands, wildlife habitats, ridgelines, and buffer zones.

Policy e: Encourage the use of cluster site plans for large parcels of land provided the design will not be detrimental to the character and scale of the community.

Clustering is the construction of buildings in closer groupings than usual with the purpose of retaining open space areas. Common access points, shared drive-ways, and the pooling of small yard spaces can create more usable open space and other amenities than is possible with traditional setbacks and access requirements. In those situations in which tradeoffs between General Plan policies are required, the preservation of Larkspur's unique community character should be given more weight than the objective of clustering to achieve open space.

Action Program [6]: Require new development to preserve some natural area.

Action Program [7]: If a development proposal requires the removal of trees or other vegetation of significant resource value or adversely impacts a wetlands area (as defined in implementing ordinances), require the developer to replace the lost resources.

The Initial Study for each public or private project should indicate whether the project will be located in or adjacent to wetlands or other natural habitat. Where wetlands or other sensitive biologic resources are identified, studies should be prepared by a qualified biologist to assess the impacts of the project and to identify measures that will fully mitigate those impacts so that the habitat values are preserved.

Action Program [8]: Avoid development in areas which contain rare or endangered species of plants or animals.

Policy f: Increase visual access to the Bay and Corte Madera Creek.

Action Program [9]: Provide public spaces with views onto the Bay and Corte Madera Creek.

Action Program [10]: Apply conditions of project approval that will preserve or open up views of the Bay and Corte Madera Creek.

Policy g: Provide boating access to Corte Madera Creek and the Bay.

Action Program [11]: Maintain or improve the existing level of access to Corte Madera Creek for the launching of small boats.

Larkspur and the Marin Rowing Club have worked out an agreement whereby the club has built a clubhouse and dock on City land near the Greenbrae (Sir Francis Drake) interchange. In return, the public can take rowing classes and use the dock on weekends. (See also Chapter 5, page 94, last paragraph, regarding this Joint Powers Agreement.)

Goal 3: Provide reasonable access to open space areas and trails without adversely impacting natural habitats.

Policy h: Seek a balance between the recreational aspects of open space and the need to protect wildlife and fragile vegetation from intrusion by humans and domestic animals.

Action Program [12]: Provide a buffer zone between natural habitats and human use areas (such as paths), and clearly mark the boundaries. Place restrictions on access to these sensitive areas by pets.

The City will consider an ordinance to implement Action Program 12. The ordinance should identify the purpose of the buffer zone, specify its size and nature, and call for protection and enhancement of biological resources, particularly wetlands, riparian streams, and creeks.

Action Program [13]: Provide hiking trails to connect Tubb Lake with the ridge top, Larkspur Landing, and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

Other Goals, Policies, and Programs relating to trails and paths are found in the Chapter 8, Trails and Paths, on pages 158-163.

Goal 4: Protect open space and shoreline/marsh conservation areas from degradation as a result of public facility needs such as roads, sewers or flood control.

Policy i: Seek to balance the needs for community safety with the goal of protection of the environment.

Action Program [14]: When dredging Corte Madera Creek, protect the wetlands along the creek.

Action Program [15]: Plan future development of the ferry terminal so as to minimize impact on nearby creek and marshland habitats.

WATER CONSERVATION AND WATER QUALITY

The City of Larkspur receives its water from the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) which serves central and southern Marin County. Most water consumers in Larkspur are connected to MMWD's Ross Valley distribution system. This distribution system is fed by three transmission lines which channel water chiefly from reservoirs on the slopes of Mount Tamalpais but also from the Russian River through pipelines of the Sonoma County Water Agency. Two of the lines come from Kentfield and run through Larkspur along Magnolia Avenue. The third comes from Kentfield along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard through Larkspur and on to San Rafael. There are few problems with water service in Larkspur.⁹

The quality of water delivered by the MMWD is considered excellent. All district water supplies meet current Environmental Protection Agency and State of California health standards after treatment. In 1989, the MMWD was planning some modifications to its two treatment plants to meet proposed new federal and State standards. Larkspur's water is treated at the Bon Tempe Treatment Plant above Phoenix Lake.

Water shortages are a perennial problem in central and southern Marin County. The drought of 1987-89 drew further attention to the need for intensive water conservation efforts. The MMWD developed public awareness and voluntary water reduction campaigns. A computer assisted program designed to help conserve water at sites with two or more acres of turf and an automatic irrigation system produced significant results. A majority of the households served by the district conserve water with low flow showers and toilets, and low-water-use landscaping. Despite these efforts, per capita water use has been increasing by about 0.6 percent per year since the early 1970s.¹⁰

In 1989, the MMWD placed a restriction on new water hook-ups as it searched for additional long-term water supplies outside the area. A water supply Master Plan, published in October 1989, recommended that the district try to obtain additional supplies from Lake Sonoma on the Russian River and the New Bullards Bar Reservoir on the Yuba River. This would require agreements with the local water agencies and approval of the State Water Resources Control Board.

Water Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goal 5: Reduce water consumption.

⁹ Ron Theisen, Principal Engineer, Marin Municipal Water District, May 1989.

¹⁰ *Water Supply Master Plan*, Marin Municipal Water District, October 1989.

Policy j: Support the efforts of the Marin Municipal Water District to reduce water consumption.

Action Program [16]: Require new and replacement public and private landscaping to use drought tolerant plantings

Standards will be developed in an implementing ordinance.

Action Program [17]: Require the installation of water-conserving plumbing fixtures in new buildings and when existing fixtures are replaced.

SOLID WASTE AND RECYCLING

Garbage service in Larkspur is provided by Marin Sanitary Service. Garbage is hauled to a landfill in Novato, but only after newspaper, cardboard, glass, and metal have been removed for recycling. Recycling services are provided by Marin Recycling, which is under the same ownership as the garbage company. Marin Recycling picks up separated recyclable materials in residential neighborhoods on the same day as regular garbage pickup. In addition, Marin Recycling manually separates recyclable materials from debris boxes and dumpsters delivered to its indoor resource recovery plant in San Rafael. As a result of these aggressive recycling programs, 25 percent of the County's waste stream is now diverted from landfill.¹¹ Thus the County is already in compliance with new state legislation that requires 25 percent diversion by 1995. By 2000, 50 percent must be diverted.

Wood and brush are also separated from the garbage and reduced to woodchips and sawdust. The woodchips are transferred to a co-generation plant and burned to produce energy. Sawdust and sand are mixed to produce topsoil.

Solid Waste Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goal 6: Reduce the total volume of the City's waste stream.

Policy k: Support programs to recycle paper, cardboard, glass, metal, plastics, motor oil, and to compost or generate energy from tree prunings, brush, and other vegetation.

Action Program [18]: Promote the use of goods containing recycled materials through City purchasing policies and other efforts. □

¹¹ Joe Garbarino, Marin Sanitary Service and Marin Recycling, November 1989.

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Chapter 7. Community Health and Safety

This chapter covers safety, as prescribed by Safety Element provisions of the Government Code, Section 65302(g); and noise, as covered by Noise Element guidelines of the Government Code, Section 65302(f). It also includes air quality. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) has strongly urged cities to address air quality in their general plans.

Community health and safety involves the protection of the community from natural hazards such as floods, earthquakes, landslides, and fires. It also involves protection from man-made hazards such as air pollution, noise, and hazardous materials. This chapter describes the scope of these hazards, as well as the actions that the City can take to eliminate or reduce the probability of these hazards leading to a major disaster. The overall purpose of this chapter is to—

Protect the community from injury, loss of life, and property damage resulting from natural disasters and hazardous conditions.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event that a disaster does occur, Larkspur must be prepared to respond. Quick action can reduce injuries and damage. Larkspur has an Emergency Plan for natural disasters, technological incidents (such as hazardous materials accidents), and nuclear defense operations. The Plan establishes an emergency management organization with the City Manager as the Director of Emergency Services and the department heads as the Emergency Management staff. Each department head has a specific assignment in a major emergency. Depending on the magnitude and type of disaster, the City may have to work closely with other levels of government. These relationships are also spelled out in the Plan.

The Plan describes how various disasters might affect Larkspur. It defines scenarios for responding to a major earthquake, a major transportation accident (airplane crash or highway accident involving multiple casualties), wildland fire, flood, landslides, and hazardous materials incident. Although the effects of these disasters may vary, the emergency responses would be similar in many cases.

Preparedness Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goal 1: Increase public awareness of flooding, seismic, landslide, fire, and other natural hazards, and of methods to avoid or mitigate the effects of these hazards.

Goal 2: Prepare to make a planned, coordinated response to a disaster.

Policy a: Maintain an updated emergency response plan.

Policy b: Identify essential emergency facilities and make provisions to ensure that they will function in the event of a disaster.

Policy c: Strive to educate the community about environmental hazards, measures which can be taken to protect lives and property, and methods for responding to various disasters.

Policy d: Cooperate with other public agencies to store, organize, distribute, and administer emergency medical equipment, supplies, services, and communications systems.

Action Program [1]: Continue to update the City's emergency plan.

Action Program [2]: Identify specific facilities and lifelines critical to effective disaster response, and evaluate their abilities to survive and operate efficiently immediately after a major disaster.

Action Program [3]: Evaluate the structural integrity of the Bon Air Bridge to withstand earthquakes, and assess the feasibility of increasing its weight-carrying capacity.

Major transportation links (highways and bridges), gas, electric, and water lines, ambulance and paramedic services, emergency broadcast services, and power substations are critical. The bridges over Corte Madera Creek will be critical to maintaining ties between north and south Larkspur.

Action Program [4]: Designate alternative facilities for post-disaster assistance in the event that primary facilities become unusable.

Part of an emergency plan is identification of those facilities that will be relied upon in the event of catastrophe. Critical facilities in (or near) Larkspur are

Marin General Hospital, the two fire stations, and the police station which includes the Emergency Operations Center. Public facilities such as schools and auditoriums may be designated as alternative facilities.

Action Program [5]: Correct known structural deficiencies.

Avoidance of hazards is another form of preparedness. By establishing and enforcing appropriate land use, design, and construction standards, and avoiding or minimizing development in areas having a history or threat of natural hazards, Larkspur can reduce its losses.

Goal 3: Avoid development in areas prone to natural hazards.

Policy e: Allow land uses in areas prone to natural hazards only with appropriate mitigation.

Action Program [6]: Continue to regulate development to assure the adequate mitigation of safety hazards on sites having a history or threat of slope instability, seismic activity (including liquefaction, subsidence, and differential settlement), flooding, or fire.

Hazard mitigation measures, specific to the type of hazard, are discussed in the following sections on flooding, seismic and geologic hazards, fire, hazardous materials, air pollution, and noise.

FLOODING

Flood hazards fall into three categories: *natural flooding, mud and debris flows, and dam inundation*. Larkspur has experienced *natural flooding* when Corte Madera and Larkspur Creeks have overflowed during extreme rainfall. Larkspur has also suffered major damage from *mud and debris flows* on steep hillsides, particularly in recent years. The inability of the topography and drainage system to handle torrential rains has exacerbated these flooding problems.¹ Larkspur is not likely to be affected by flooding from dam failure. A new spillway and other remedial work have reinforced the Phoenix Lake dam, the nearest dam upstream from Larkspur.²

¹ *Flood Insurance Study for City of Larkspur*, Federal Emergency Management Agency, 1983, page 6.

² The dam was buttressed on the downstream side in 1970, to survive a "design earthquake." In 1988, the spillway was rebuilt and lowered six feet. Any flood damage resulting from flood inundation would largely be confined to areas northwest of Larkspur—i.e., to the narrow Ross Valley down to and including the College of Marin and the College Park subdivision (18 homes). From there downstream, the canyon widens into a broad alluvial flood plain where dam flood waters would rapidly dissipate. (Source: Dana Raxon, Marin Municipal Water District, August 1989 and May 14, 1990).

Significant flood damage occurred in 1955, 1958, 1973, and 1982. The flood of late December 1955 caused serious damage in the Heather Gardens neighborhood where many families had to be evacuated by rowboat. Torrential rainfall in April 1958, and two back-to-back storms in January 1973, also caused severe flooding in Larkspur.

The January 1982 storm was the worst in the state since 1955. In Marin County, 12 inches of rain fell in 36 hours. Unlike the earlier floods in Larkspur, the greatest loss of property was due to mudslides—or more accurately, debris avalanches which start suddenly and move quickly. Four homes, two in Madrone Canyon and two in the Murray Park area, were destroyed, as well as eight apartments at Skylark. Public and private damage was estimated at \$3 million.³

Larkspur consistently receives greater rainfall amounts than the majority of Marin County because it is in the shadow of Mount Tamalpais. Kentfield, which is upstream from Larkspur, has the highest average annual rainfall in the Bay Area—52.5 inches. The lower areas of Larkspur receive about 38 inches a year. Also, the nature of the soil in Larkspur is such that very little water percolates into the ground, and runoff is high.⁴

Large areas of Larkspur south of Corte Madera Creek are within the 100-year flood zone, meaning that there is a probability of their being flooded once every 100 years (or a one percent chance of being flooded in any one year). The boundaries of the 100-year flood zone are shown on Figure 7-1. Most of the flood zone is so designated because of the potential for flooding during a 100-year high tide, rather than from excessive rainfall.

Flood Control and Storm Drainage Improvements

In 1968, the Army Corps of Engineers began to dredge, straighten, and line Corte Madera Creek with concrete. By 1972, the project had been completed from the mouth of the creek to the Town of Ross, a distance of about 3.5 miles.⁵ However, Ross opposes placing the creek in a concrete channel, and work on the last phase, through the town, has been stalled. Until the last phase has been completed, Larkspur will not be adequately protected from freshwater flooding. Even then, the improvements will not provide protection from tidal flooding.

³ Carolyn Campbell, Public Works Director, City of Larkspur, 1989.

⁴ *Storm Drain Master Plan Study, City of Larkspur*, May 1988.

⁵ Flood Insurance Study.

LARKSPUR GENERAL PLAN

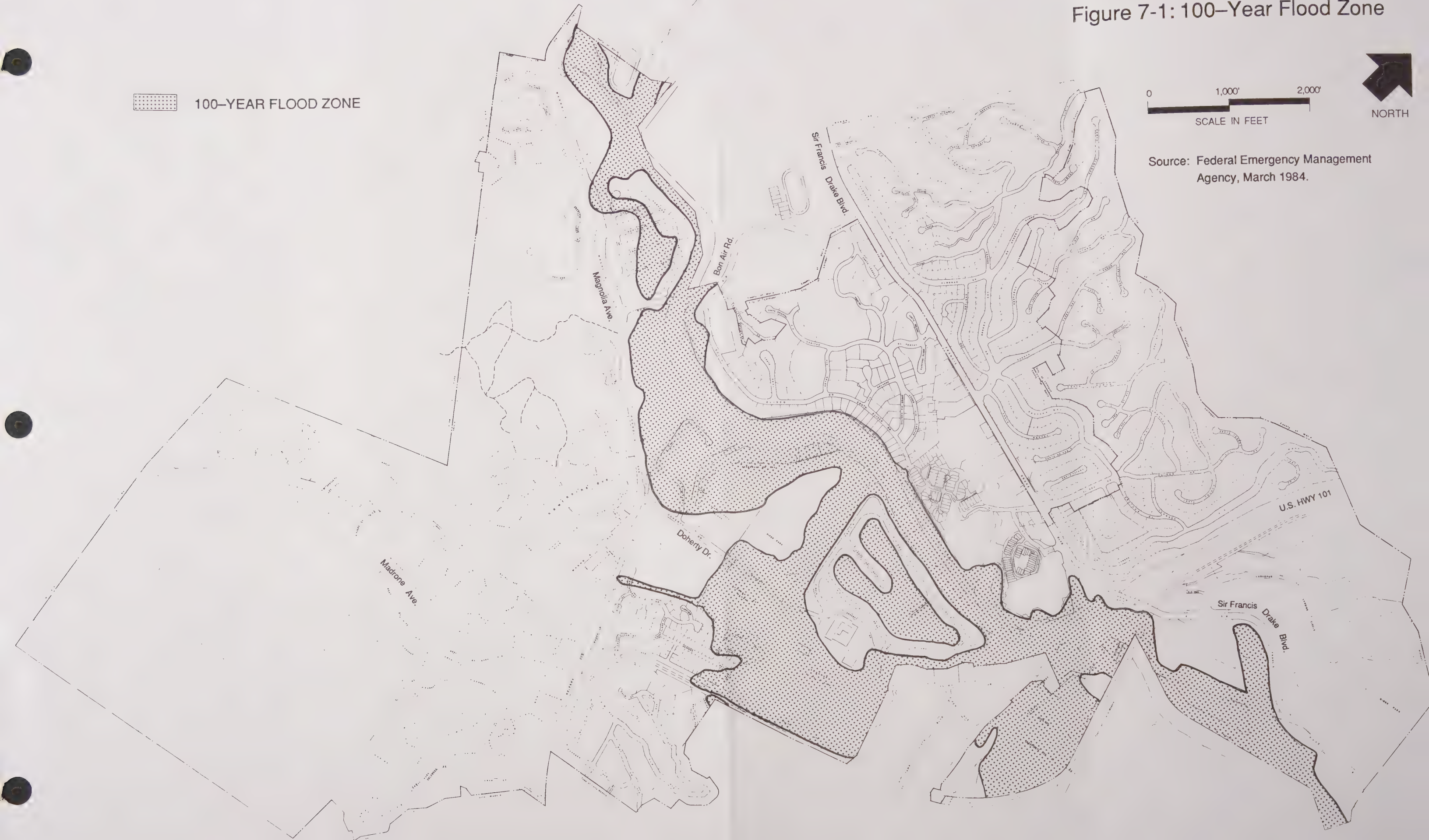
Figure 7-1: 100-Year Flood Zone

 100-YEAR FLOOD ZONE

0 1,000' 2,000'
SCALE IN FEET



Source: Federal Emergency Management
Agency, March 1984.



The portion of Larkspur Creek (also known as Arroyo Holon) between Monte Vista Avenue and about Meadowood Drive has been diverted to a culvert. A 1989 study also recommended an earthen berm and a concrete floodwall be constructed along a section of the creek near Meadowood Drive.

In 1988, Larkspur undertook a Storm Drain Master Plan Study of the older portion of Larkspur—the area south of Corte Madera Creek and west of Highway 101. Historically, most of Larkspur's flooding has occurred in this area. Also, certain areas adjacent to Corte Madera Creek have experienced significant settlement over the years, exposing them to increased flooding.⁶

Most of the storm drain system in the study area is 30 to 40 years old. The system evolved piecemeal as it was gradually extended upstream to serve new development and as problems occurred. A significant portion of the system has settled and deteriorated, causing maintenance and flooding problems. Also, because much of it is located on private property, the system lacks adequate capacity to convey runoff.

The study recommended a series of improvements (trash racks, catch basins, use of concrete pipe, and annual inspections of open channels on private property) to reduce flooding problems. It also concluded that more pumping stations will be needed to protect against high tides inundating low-lying developed land.

Flooding problems east of Highway 101 and south of Corte Madera Creek have been somewhat alleviated by the installation of a new storm drain system and pump station. However, it is still necessary to sandbag the low-lying area near the creek because of tidewater flooding. Flood walls and a tide gate are needed to provide permanent protection.

Rise in Sea Level

Recent scientific studies indicate that sea level is rising at an accelerated rate. A global climate change caused by the accumulation of "greenhouse" gases in the atmosphere (carbon dioxide, methane, and chlorofluorocarbons) is projected to raise the temperature of the earth's atmosphere, melting some of the earth's glaciers and polar ice caps. If recent historic trends continue, global sea level should increase between four and five inches in the Bay in the next 50 years and could increase approximately one and one-half to five feet by the year 2100.

⁶ Storm Drain Study.

Although the phenomenon is not fully understood, the rising sea level has implications for Larkspur and other cities along San Francisco Bay. Tidal circulation could change and wave action could increase. Drainage would be impeded, and ground water could be contaminated. The Bay Conservation and Development Commission, which regulates land use along the Bay, recommends that local governments take the predicted rise into consideration in land use planning and development review.⁷

Flood Hazard Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goal 4: Protect Larkspur from the risk of flood damage.

Policy f: Seek to have the Corte Madera Creek flood control improvements completed upstream from Larkspur.

Action Program [7]: Work with the Marin County Flood Control District, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Town of Ross to develop and implement an improvement plan that protects against flooding.

Policy g: Work with other cities in the Ross Valley to develop a comprehensive master plan for flood control and management of Corte Madera Creek.

The Kentfield/Greenbrae Community Plan recommends that the Corte Madera Creek master plan consider flood heights under present and future conditions and under various flood frequency intervals (10, 30, 50, and 100-year floods). The influence of future urbanization and rising sea level should be evaluated. The plan should also consider the possibility of retention structures on parking lots, roofs, *etc.*, curtailment of development, and planting and maintenance of vegetation to enhance bank stability, aesthetic values, and recreational opportunities.

Policy h: Regulate land uses in flood-prone areas and allow development in those areas only with appropriate mitigation.

This policy, in meeting the general goal of protecting Larkspur from flood damage, has two specific objectives: one is to protect property; the other is to maintain an adequate cross-section for the discharge of flood waters.

⁷ Marin County General Plan, Environmental Hazards Element, Draft Technical Report #1, *Flood Hazards: Existing Conditions and Recent Studies*, Feb. 1988; and Amendment 3-88 to "San Francisco Bay Plan," Bay Conservation and Development Commission.

A map of possible inundation resulting from a failure of the dam at Phoenix Lake has been prepared by the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD). (See footnote 2 on page 125.) The map is available to the public at the City Planning and Public Works departments and the MMWD offices.

Action Program [8]: Establish standards for minimum grades and minimum finished floor elevations that take into consideration the rising sea level during the expected life of the project.

Based on historic trends, the 100-year maximum high tide is projected to reach an elevation of 6.4 feet NGVD (National Geodetic Vertical Datum) along Corte Madera Creek, but other factors (wave runup, siltation, and the predicted rise in sea level) can be expected to raise it higher. Because of these factors, Larkspur has raised its minimum standard for finished floor elevations from 8 to 9.4 feet.

Policy i: Continue to upgrade the City's drainage system.

Action Program [9]: Implement the recommendations of the 1988 Storm Drain Master Plan study.

Action Program [10]: Construct flood walls and a tide gate in the area east of Highway 101.

Action Program [11]: Balance required protection measures with the need to protect environmental resources, and do so in such a way as to integrate design improvements with the protection of natural resources.

Action Program [12]: Require site plans to locate structures outside or above the 100-year flood zone wherever possible.

SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

The geology of Larkspur plays a major role in assessing the city's exposure to seismic and geologic risks.

Three major groups of geologic materials underlie Larkspur. Sedimentary rock of the Franciscan Formation is the bedrock beneath the ridges and slopes forming Larkspur's northern and southern boundaries and Bon Air Hill. See Figure 7-2 following page 130. A large part of the Franciscan Formation underlying Larkspur is *Franciscan melange*, a mix of rock types embedded in crushed rock materials. Melange has highly erratic slope stability characteristics.

Fingers of alluvial stream deposits (clay, sand, silt, and gravel) extend down the hillsides in swales and creek beds to gently sloping alluvial fans and floodplains. These soils were eroded from the steep slopes and transported by flooding streams. The older area of Larkspur (Downtown and the nearby residential neighborhoods) lies in a wide flat alluvial valley. Occasional erosion-resistant hills or knolls such as Palm Hill and some of its small neighbors protrude above the otherwise flat plain.

The third type of geological material is Bay mud, which lies in a broad band between Magnolia Avenue on the south and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard on the north (excluding Bon Air Hill). The older Bay mud reaches a thickness of 40 feet at the mouth of Corte Madera Creek. Bay mud is an unconsolidated jelly-like material that is both highly compressible, and subject to lateral flow when loads are placed on it.⁸

Seismic Hazards

A seismic *hazard* is the effect of an earthquake such as surface faulting, ground shaking, ground failure, or tsunami or seiche (tidal waves). All of these must be addressed in the general plan.

Larkspur is not at risk from *surface rupture*. The San Andreas fault, which is the only active fault in Marin County, lies eight miles to the west of the city. The Hayward fault, also active, lies 13 miles to the east.

Larkspur is at risk from *ground shaking*—underground vibrations or waves generated by the breaking and snapping of rocks along a fault line during an earthquake. Most damage associated with past—and future—earthquakes is from ground shaking. Ground shaking causes direct damage to buildings, roads, and utilities. The greatest losses solely from ground shaking may occur where tall structures are built on thick, relatively soft, saturated sediments, and the least where they are built on firm bedrock.⁹ Ground shaking can also trigger liquefaction, landslides, and tsunamis, indirectly affecting these same facilities.

Larkspur is also at risk from *ground failure*, in the form of liquefaction, settlement, and landslides. *Liquefaction* is a process by which water saturated clay-free sands or silts are transformed from a solid to a liquid state. Areas suscepti-

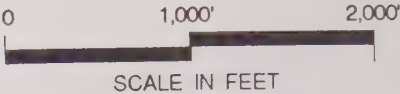
⁸ Information on geology was obtained from *Geologic Report and Selected Geologic Aspects of Larkspur*, James C. Bangert, 1974; Preliminary Geologic Map of Marin (and other) Counties, United States Geological Survey, 1974; and Marin County General Plan, Environmental Hazards Element, Draft Technical Report #3, *Seismic and Geologic Hazards in Marin County*, August 1988.

⁹ Marin County Technical Report #3.

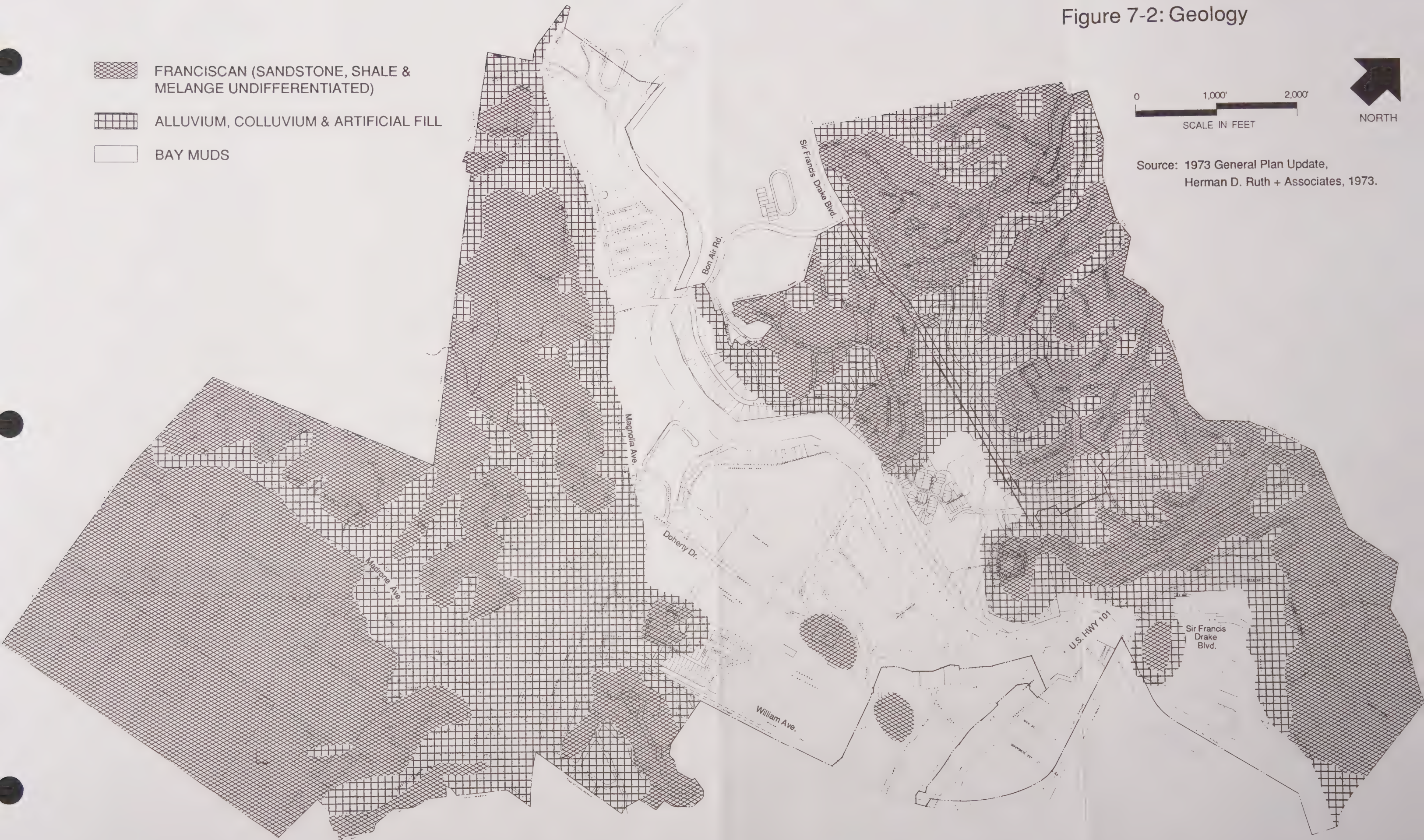
LARKSPUR GENERAL PLAN

Figure 7-2: Geology

- FRANCISCAN (SANDSTONE, SHALE & MELANGE UNDIFFERENTIATED)
- ALLUVIUM, COLLUVIUM & ARTIFICIAL FILL
- BAY MUDS



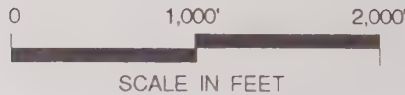
Source: 1973 General Plan Update,
Herman D. Ruth + Associates, 1973.



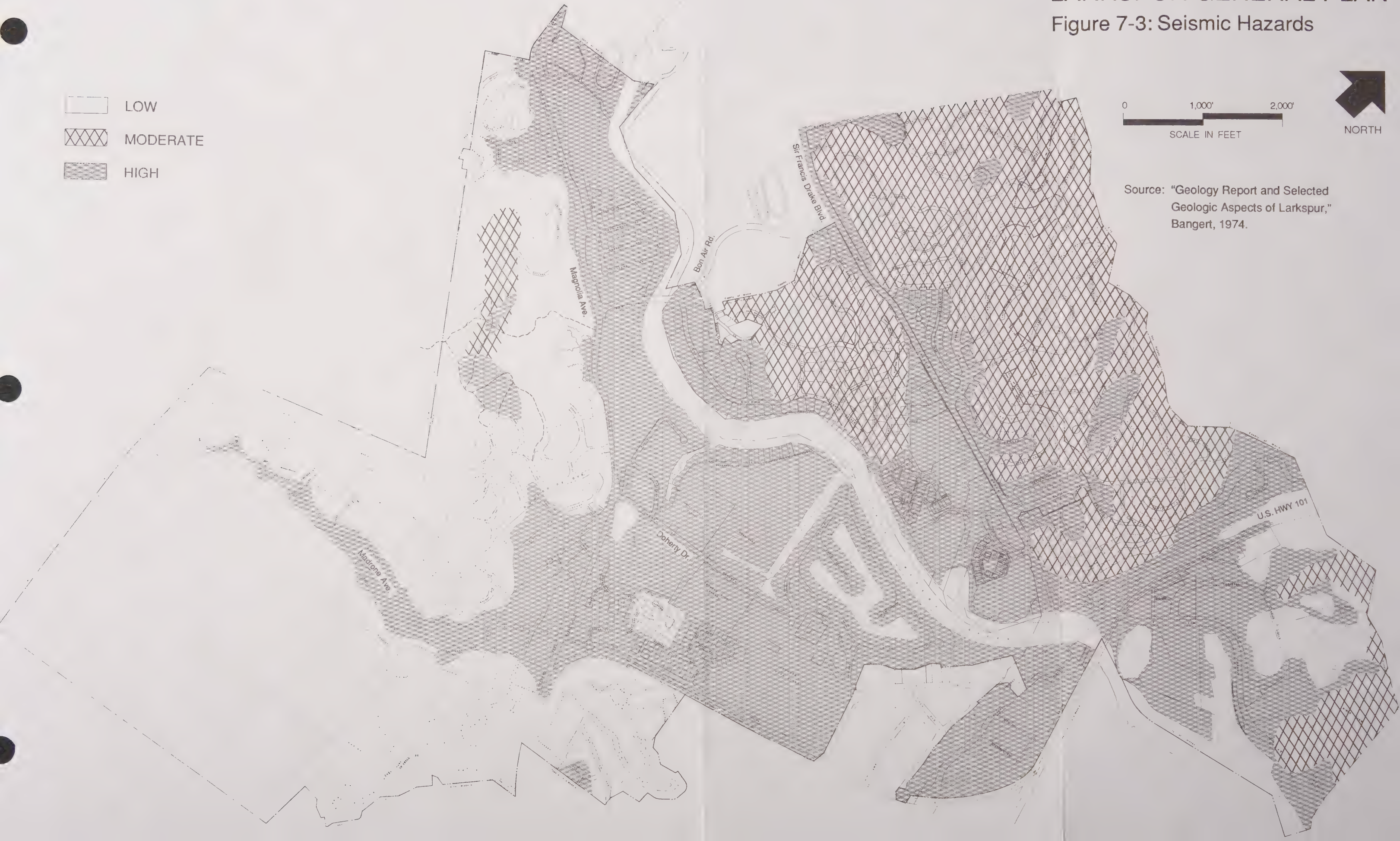
LARKSPUR GENERAL PLAN

Figure 7-3: Seismic Hazards

- LOW
- MODERATE
- HIGH



Source: "Geology Report and Selected
Geologic Aspects of Larkspur,"
Bangert, 1974.



ble to liquefaction in Larkspur are those underlain by saturated, loosely compacted granular materials such as old stream beds (alluvium).¹⁰

Settlement is the drop in elevation of a ground surface caused by settling or compacting of the underlying material. The most severe and damaging settlement is most likely to result from liquefaction and landsliding. Settlement may occur without seismic activity, as discussed under Geologic Hazards.

Landslides, the jarring loose of basically unstable hillside materials, are another type of ground failure. Landslides induced by earthquakes will occur generally in the same marginally stable areas as landslides induced by other forces, such as rainfall.

A *tsunami* is a large ocean wave generated by an earthquake in or near the ocean. A tsunami would be expected to reach approximately 10 feet in the Bay near Larkspur. The wave run-up would generally be confined to the area east of the railroad crossing on Corte Madera Creek. Tideland areas and filled ground near or below sea level could be inundated. A *seiche* is an earthquake-generated wave in an enclosed body of water, such as a lake, reservoir, or bay. Similar run-up and inundation would be expected from a seiche.¹¹

Figure 7-3 divides Larkspur into three seismic hazard categories based on the underlying geology. Areas with the least earthquake stability are composed of artificial fill, Bay mud, and landslide and stream deposits. The thick, loose soils of Bay mud tend to amplify and prolong the shaking. Areas of moderate stability are composed of sandstone, shale, and melange. The most stable areas are underlain by hard sandstone.

Effects of Earthquakes

Earthquakes are measured in terms of magnitude and intensity. The measure of magnitude, the Richter scale, is more commonly recognized. It assigns a number to the calculated energy release of an earthquake which is independent of the earthquake's observed effects. The Modified Mercalli Intensity (MMI) scale assigns a Roman number (I to XII) based on a description of the physical effects of earthquakes. The intensity can vary with the magnitude of the earthquake, the distance from the site to the faults, and with geologic materials.

The intensity of the maximum possible earthquake in Larkspur would vary depending on geologic conditions in each location. Bay muds would experience

¹⁰ Geologic Report.

¹¹ Larkspur Seismic Safety Element, 1973.

the greatest intensity of shaking, and corresponding severe damage to nearly all structures (MMI XI). The alluvium areas would experience a lesser intensity of shaking with destruction of most masonry and frame structures (MMI X). The Franciscan rock areas would experience the least shaking, resulting in general damage to foundations and frame buildings (MMI IX).¹²

The ability of buildings to withstand earthquakes depends on when they were built and their structure type. Buildings built before 1933 did not have to meet building code regulations relating to earthquake resistance. Since then, codes have been updated several times, and newer buildings are increasingly more resistant to damage. Generally, older wood frame structures may perform relatively well, while unreinforced masonry buildings (usually brick, stone, or concrete block with no reinforcement) probably do not meet current seismic safety standards, and may not withstand a major earthquake. In conformance with state legislation passed in 1985, Larkspur has identified 15 unreinforced masonry buildings scattered through the area south of Corte Madera Creek. Although several are located downtown, most downtown buildings, including City Hall, are wood frame. State law requires that cities must adopt a mitigation program for buildings of unreinforced masonry.

A major earthquake (8.3 magnitude on either the San Andreas or Hayward Fault), in addition to damaging buildings, can be expected to topple the Highway 101 freeway overpass at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and buckle pavement on Highway 101 and Magnolia Avenue through Larkspur. The earthquake could set off landslides along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard leaving Greenbrae separated from the rest of Larkspur for up to 24 hours.¹³ Bon Air Road and Doherty Drive could also collapse from liquefaction and settlement. Utility lines carrying water, gas, and sewage could be ruptured by landslides and sudden settlement. If fires break out, emergency response teams could encounter serious difficulties in fighting them if water lines are broken and landslides block access roads.

Seismic Hazard Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goal 5: Reduce risks of personal injury and property damage associated with seismic activity.

Policy j: Establish acceptable levels of risk and life safety standards, and see that buildings are built to, or brought up to, those standards.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Scenario developed under the Earthquake Preparedness Program of the California Division of Mines and Geology.

Action Program [13]: Require that all unreinforced masonry buildings are seismically upgraded to protect against loss of life.

Action Program [14]: Alert owners of homes built prior to a specified date (related to early codes) that building frames should be bolted to foundations.

Action Program [15]: Establish a basic seismic safety notification process through resale inspections.

Action Program [16]: As soon as legally permissible, adopt new versions of the Uniform Building Code which contain updated seismic requirements.

The Uniform Building Code (UBC) is periodically updated, but there may be a lag between the time the Code language is re-written and the time when it is adopted by the local jurisdiction. Immediate local adoption will help ensure that the most current standards are applied to new buildings.

Action Program [17]: Require geotechnical engineering investigations for (a) buildings proposed to be constructed in "high" seismic hazard areas potentially subject to severe ground shaking and ground failure (Bay mud, stream and landslide deposits) as shown on Figure 7-3, and (b) critical structures or structures made of materials other than wood frame.

The required geotechnical investigations should include a site-specific characterization of anticipated strong ground motion, which would include the estimated peak horizontal ground acceleration, the duration of strong shaking, and the site period. A structural engineer should then review the seismic data to determine whether the minimum UBC criteria will be adequate.

Policy k: Seek to preserve existing historic buildings under any new standards that are adopted.

Geologic Hazards

Geologic hazards exist in Larkspur in the form of landslides, debris flows, subsidence, and differential settlement. Landslides, the principal geologic hazard in Larkspur, occur on the hillsides forming the city's boundaries. Subsidence and differential settlement have occurred along Corte Madera Creek in areas underlain with Bay mud.

Natural conditions which affect slope stability are steepness of the slope, characteristics of the soil, degree of water saturation, and seismic activity. Human activities that can contribute to landslides include steep cuts in the slope, improper placement of fill on slopes, concentrating surface runoff, and over-watering.

During the winter storms of 1982, landslides (debris avalanches) in Larkspur produced over 10,000 cubic yards of soil, rock, and debris.¹⁴ Slope movements resulted in several million dollars in damage to homes, roads, and other improvements (see Flooding, page 125). After that, the City undertook a study of the nature, extent, and magnitude of slope stability hazards in a 300-acre area of undeveloped land on the city's southwestern slopes. The results of the study ("Hillslope Processes in Urban Planning") can be generalized to the other hillside areas in the city.

The report found that land surfaces in the study area had been shaped predominantly by erosion processes which could be expected to continue to actively change the landscape. Areas underlain by melange (described earlier) tended to produce more landslides. Physical disturbances of the ground resulting from land use activities have exacerbated slope stability problems in some areas. These activities include siting structures and road improvements on—or in the path of—landslides, and the improper design, use, or installation of retaining wall structures, drainage facilities, and cut slopes.

The report includes detailed maps showing landslide and slope movement locations in the study area.

Because debris avalanches result from a sudden failure of natural or human-modified slopes and travel at high speeds, it is difficult to provide advance warning to those in the path of the flow. However, local residents could be warned when heavy rainfall and total storm precipitation indicate increased landslide potential.

Subsidence and differential settlement have occurred in Larkspur near Corte Madera Creek. Differential (or uneven) settlement may occur in poorly consolidated soils during earthquake shaking or over time. Settlement may be the result of poorly engineered fill, or of building on soils which are too weak to assume the load. In 1974, construction of several condominium developments on Corte Madera Creek had to be halted when cracks up to one inch wide were discovered in outside walls.¹⁵

¹⁴ *Hillslope Processes and Urban Planning*, Paul J. Seidelman and Jeffrey D. Borum, 1983.

¹⁵ Geologic Report.

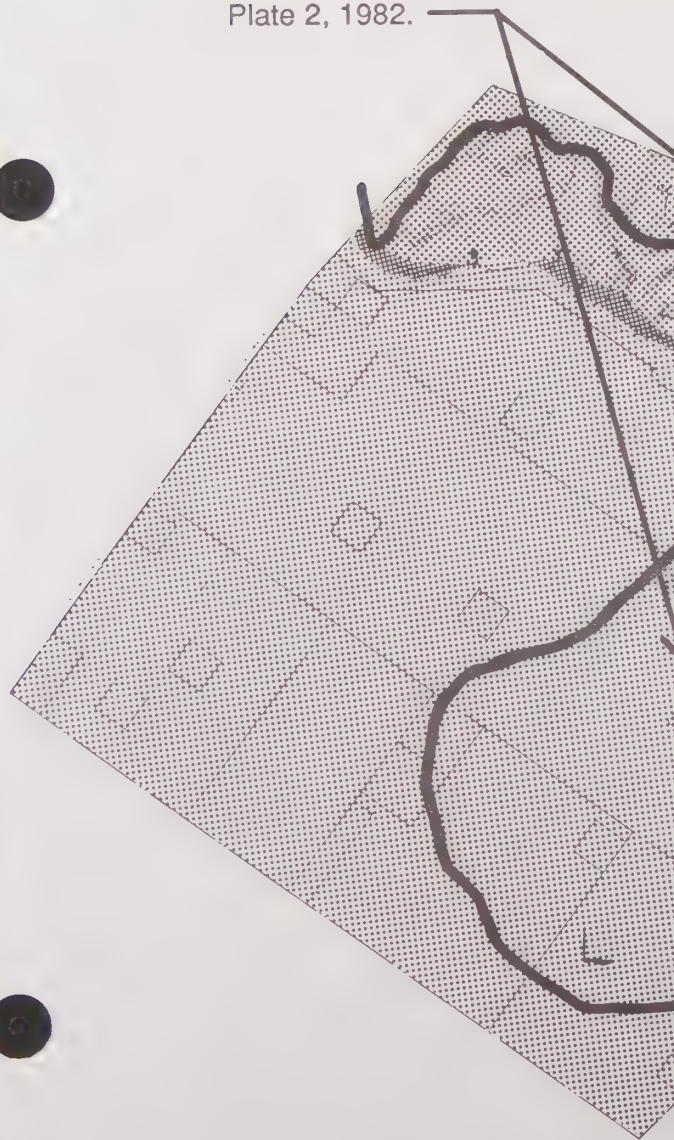


ZONE 3: MODERATE
MODERATE STABIL



ZONE 4: STEEP SLO
UNSTABLE WITH LA

For slope stability in these two a
delman Associates, "Hillslope
Urban Planning, Larkspur, CA,"
Plate 2, 1982.



When settlement occurs over a large area it is called subsidence. Subsidence may result in flooding as ground levels are lowered (see section on flooding).

Figure 7-4 following page 134 shows four slope stability zones for Larkspur. Zone 1 includes areas of artificial fill over Bay mud or stream deposits. Although generally stable, they are prone to settlement. Zone 2 (flat or gentle slopes in valleys and along ridges) is the most stable. Zone 3 is similar to Zone 2 except that slopes are steeper and they are underlain by rock and slope deposits. Zone 4 (landslides, and quarry walls and highway cuts prone to rock falls) is the least stable. It should be emphasized that the zones are generalized.

In 1982–83, more detailed geologic studies were made of two areas west of Magnolia Avenue. These two areas—called out on Figure 7-4 by solid boundary lines—are evaluated and extensively discussed in “Hillslope Processes and Urban Planning, Larkspur, CA,” by Seidelman Associates, Lafayette, California, 1983, available in the City of Larkspur Planning Department.

Geologic Hazard Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goal 6: **Limit the exposure of existing and future structures to risk from landslides, debris flow, and subsidence, and minimize the potential for damage.**

Policy I: Provide property owners with information to assist them in addressing their risk from landslides and debris flows.

Action Program [18]: Make available to developers (and to owners of residences) in areas of steep slopes with seasonal and intermittent drainages, the City's geotechnical reports on and information regarding the potential hazards from debris slides and flows, and encourage them to seek professional advice from registered engineers or certified engineering geologists on how to lessen potential risks.

Action Program [19]: Develop a program to protect existing structures located in high risk areas by promoting the use of debris fences (to deflect debris flows around structures) or other mechanisms.

Action Program [20]: Provide residents with information about the geotechnical hazards of heavy rainfall in areas of landslide potential, and the need to evacuate.

Action Program [21]: Provide property owners with standard public drainage designs that may be retrofitted to existing homes.

Action Program [22]: For development in hillside areas, establish, by ordinance, standards for foundations and retaining walls that meet or exceed the current state of the art in structural and civil engineering practice. The standards shall include:

(a) A retaining wall that provides support for the footings of a structure must have the same life expectancy as that of the supported structure.

(b) A series of stepped or terraced retaining walls should be designed and approved by a qualified engineer even when the height of the individual walls is less than the standard that requires review.

(c) A soils engineer or engineering geologist will be required to provide field supervision of the drilling and concrete pouring operations for pier foundations to insure the exclusion of loose debris from the pier holes, insure adequate pier depth, and confirm soil conditions.

(d) Foundation plans for hillside structures utilizing pier foundations in soil depths of six feet or greater shall be designed to structural and soils engineering calculations based upon passive pressures and shall demonstrate to the satisfaction of the City that the pier will satisfactorily resist shearing.

Policy m: Ensure that new development in hillside areas takes place only in areas that are relatively free from the threat of landslide and other forms of ground failure.

Action Program [23]: Require approval of a use permit for building additions or new development in areas with an average percent of slope equal to or greater than 25 percent.

Action Program [24]: Employ the following standards for assessing the acceptability of new construction in hillside areas and those adjacent areas with a potential risk from landslides and debris flows.

(a) Areas subject to recent slope movement or within the paths of debris flows are not suitable for the development of occupied structures. Further disruption of these high risk areas will only be permitted by the

City for roads, utilities, and other similar facilities after intensive geologic studies have determined that mitigation measures are practical and their costs warranted.

(b) Generally, parcels with an average slope of 65 percent or greater (or that portion of a parcel with a slope of this magnitude) that show evidence of having been formed by landslide processes in the past are not suited for the development of occupied structures.

(c) Sites underlain by deep-seated landslides and landslide debris deposits may only be developed with occupied structures if detailed geotechnical investigations demonstrate that any soils creep and future deep seated slide processes will, in the City's opinion, be satisfactorily mitigated.

(d) High energy flow paths are not suitable for the development of occupied structures. These flow paths are steep seasonal drainages that have been a path for debris flows in the past.

(e) The development of new occupied structures within debris flow dissipation areas, which are those areas in the vicinity of the mouths of high energy flow paths, will be permitted only if adequate mitigation measures are provided.

Action Program [25]: Require site-specific geologic and geotechnical reports for new construction in hillside areas and areas subject to settlement or subsidence.

Action Program [26]: Adopt standards for geologic and geotechnical reports that outline the type and extent of investigation required for various stages of the development process, for various geologic and soils conditions, and for the type of land use and structure proposed.

(a) Proposed development should include detailed plans for drainage facilities. These plans should incorporate a hydrologic and, where appropriate, a geomorphic evaluation of existing drainage courses and City drainage facilities that will be impacted by the project. The evaluation should demonstrate the adequacy of these systems. After adequacy is demonstrated, the drainage facilities should be connected to City storm drains.

(b) In hillside areas and at the mouths of seasonal and intermittent streams, a geologic report should be required as a part of the site development review process for all structures proposed for human occupancy and situated where geologic hazards may directly or indirectly influence the design, location, and safety of the structure. A geotechnical report should be required where soil engineering and/or geologic conditions may affect the design, location, and safety of a structure proposed for human habitation.

FIRE HAZARDS

Two categories of fire hazard exist in Larkspur: structural fires, which can damage the home or workplace, and wildland fires, which can quickly explode out of control in the city's hillside chaparral, grassland, and forested areas.

Larkspur maintains two fire stations: the main station next to City Hall downtown and a second station just off Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Larkspur's 16-person crew (five firefighters per shift) is supplemented by an automatic aid agreement with the Corte Madera and Kentfield fire departments, and a mutual aid agreement with San Rafael. There is also a 25-person volunteer force.

The Fire Department tries to maintain a six-minute response time, although some hillside neighborhoods are up to seven (Madrone Woodlands) and eight minutes (highest part of Sunrise Lane) away.

Larkspur's fire prevention activities include annual inspections of all businesses, public structures, and apartment buildings. Also, owners of vacant lots annually are required to clear their property of excessive vegetation. In addition, the Fire Department reviews building permit applications to ensure that new construction meets Building and Fire Code requirements relating to fire safety.

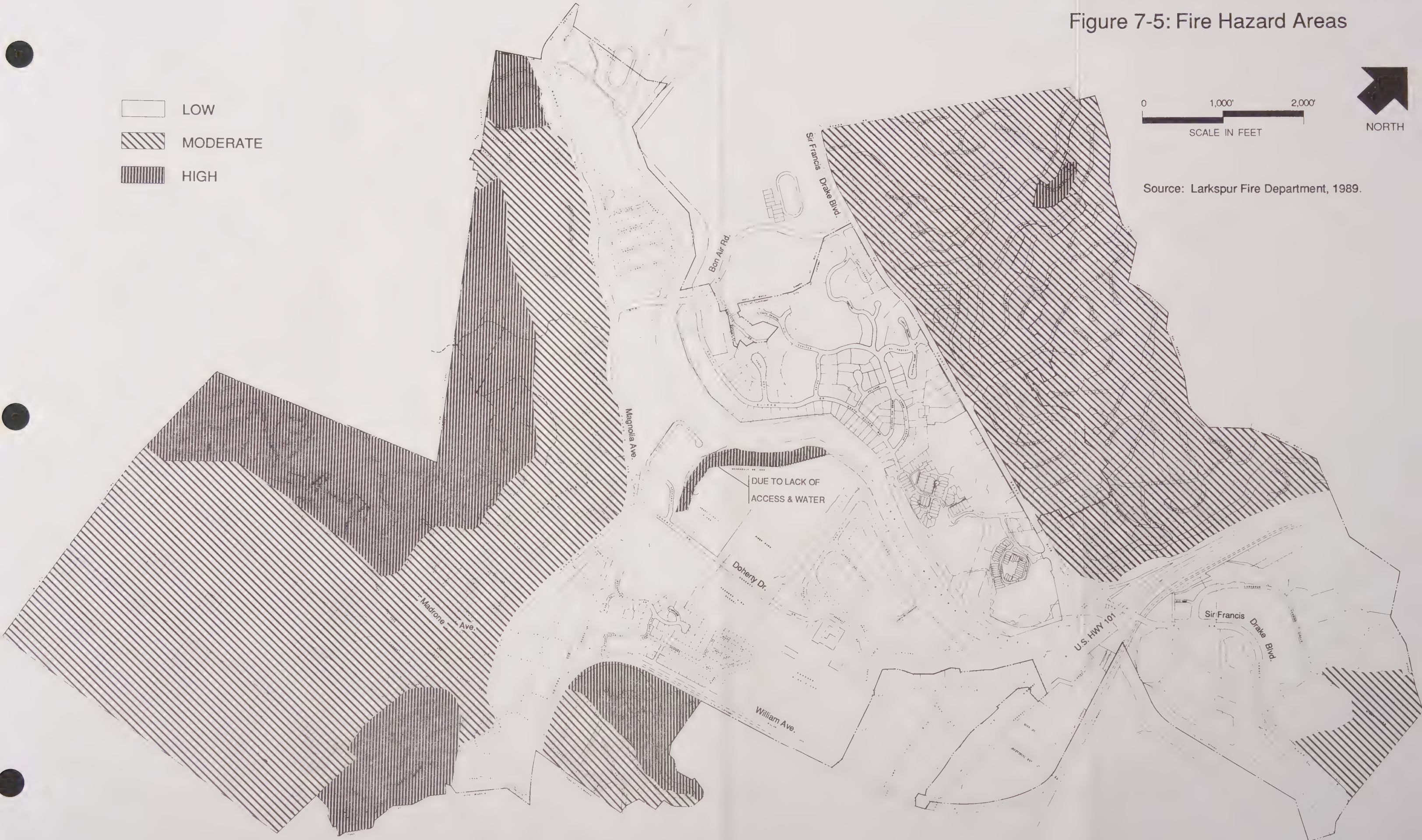
Wildland Fires

About 50 percent of the land area in Larkspur is at risk from wildland fires.¹⁶ Some of the land is open space, but developed hillsides are also at risk. (See Figure 7-5.) Like the rest of Marin County, Larkspur's periodically arid climate, combined with extensive areas of grass and brush-covered open space and variable topography, create an ever-present threat of wildland fire. Extreme weather conditions, such as high temperatures, low humidity, and strong winds may cause an ordinary fire to expand into one of massive proportions. A high fuel load, resulting from years of accumulation, contributes to the problem.

¹⁶ Larkspur Emergency Plan, Hazard Summary for Major Wildland Fire.

LARKSPUR GENERAL PLAN

Figure 7-5: Fire Hazard Areas



Steep slopes allow lowland fires to preheat vegetation before climbing hillsides, increasing the rate of fire spread and impeding firefighter access.

Many homes located in high risk fire areas were built of combustible building materials or with stilt and pole construction. The latter allows suspended floor areas to trap heat, increasing opportunities to ignite the homes.

Besides the loss of property and natural vegetation from a wildland fire, firefighting efforts could scar the land through bulldozing, road cutting, and use of fire retardant chemicals. Erosion and landslides may occur on the denuded slopes during the rainy season.

Fire Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goal 7: Protect Larkspur residents and property from fire hazards.

Goal 8: Minimize the risk of wildland and structural fires, and ensure adequate fire protection.

Policy n: Provide fast and efficient fire suppression service to Larkspur residents.

Action Program [27]: Establish performance standards such as desired response times for police, fire, and other public services.

Policy o: Maintain an aggressive fire prevention program.

Action Program [28]: Continue to inspect all businesses, public buildings and apartment buildings annually for fire and building code violations.

Action Program [29]: Continue to require that all vacant lots annually be cleared of excessive vegetation.

Action Program [30]: Continue to require smoke alarms and Class C or better fire retardant roofs for all new construction.

Policy p: Establish more stringent fire protection standards for private development in high risk fire hazard areas.

Areas considered to be significantly at risk for a high-loss fire are Madrone Canyon, Madrone Woodlands, hillside areas of Greenbrae, Northridge, King Mountain, and the eastern side of Palm Hill.

Action Program [31]: Require that automatic sprinkler systems be installed in new residences in areas with difficult access and/or poor water supply.

Action Program [32]: Require that brush be cleared for a distance of 30 feet from residences in high fire-hazard areas.

Action Program [33]: Establish landscaping guidelines that encourage the use of fire-resistant plants in high fire-hazard areas.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Larkspur is a residential community, seemingly removed from the risk of accidental exposure to hazardous materials. However, hazardous materials are used, stored, and transported through Larkspur every day. Several manufacturing processes in the area east of Highway 101 use hazardous materials. Neighborhood gas stations and dry cleaners also use explosive products and solvents, and almost every household keeps some hazardous materials on hand (insecticides, paint, etc.).

Marin County's Hazardous Waste Management Plan shows that:

- In 1986, Marin County generated about 7,700 tons of hazardous waste.
- Of this, 85 percent of the wastes were generated by 1,400 "small quantity" generators.
- Marin households contribute about 5 percent of the total waste stream.
- Waste oil is the largest constituent of Marin's hazardous waste stream, and solvents are the second largest constituent.
- Marin County's overall waste stream may nearly double by the year 2000 if source reduction is not implemented.

In addition to hazardous materials used and stored in Marin County, significant risk is posed by trucks carrying flammable liquids and gases, corrosives, explosives, and oxidizers along Highway 101. An accidental release of any of these products could result in a serious threat to life and property, as well as secondary effects of fire, explosion, or public health risk.¹⁷

¹⁷ Larkspur Emergency Plan, Hazard Summary for Hazardous Materials Incident.

In the event of a major hazardous materials accident, Larkspur can request assistance from the San Rafael Hazardous Material Response Team under a joint-powers agreement. For flammable or combustible liquid spills, the City may request assistance from the Chevron Oil refinery. There are also limited resources for cleaning up on-site flammable or combustible liquid spills at the Larkspur Ferry terminal.

Handling of hazardous materials is regulated by several State and federal agencies. Commercial use and storage of hazardous materials is subject to the provisions of the California Occupational Health and Safety Act (CALOSHA), the Uniform Fire Code, the Uniform Building Code, and other state and federal legislation. Transport of hazardous materials and wastes is regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation and the California Highway Patrol Motor Carrier Division, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the State Department of Health Services (DOHS). Counties have been designated by the DOHS as the enforcement agencies for many of the hazardous materials regulations. The Marin County Environmental Health Department regulates both underground and above-ground storage facilities within Larkspur.

The Marin County Hazardous Waste Management Plan—which provides guidance at the local level—is included by reference in the Larkspur General Plan. The County Plan was prepared under a state directive (the Tanner bill) which required cities and counties to find ways to minimize hazardous waste through source reduction and recycling at various stages. The Plan also addresses enforcement of standards and regulations, emergency response, safe transportation, and prevention and clean-up of contaminated sites. More than 100 implementation measures are recommended.

Hazardous Material Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goal 9: Protect Larkspur from accidental exposure to hazardous materials from spills, leaks, vapor releases, and improper or illegal storage and disposal.

Policy q: Limit the use and storage of hazardous materials in Larkspur to commercial and industrial areas.

Action Program [34]: Designate zone districts where hazardous materials can be used and stored.

Action Program [35]: Closely monitor and enforce regulations concerning the use and handling of hazardous materials.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) does regional air quality planning, regulates stationary sources, and operates a system of 17 air quality monitors throughout the Bay Area to track local and regional air quality conditions. The only Marin County monitor is located at 534 Fourth Street in San Rafael. Readings from this monitor are the primary source of information about air quality in the county.

The table below summarizes federal and state ambient air quality standards for the major pollutants.

Figure 7-6
Federal and State Ambient Air Quality Standards

<u>Pollutant</u>	<u>Averaging Time</u>	<u>National Standard</u>	<u>California Standard</u>
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	8-Hour	9.0 ppm	9.0 ppm
Ozone (O ₃)	1-Hour	0.12 ppm	0.10 ppm
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO)	Annual 1-Hour	0.05 ppm	0.25 ppm
Sulfur Dioxide (SO ₂)	Annual 24-Hour	0.03 ppm 0.14 ppm	0.05 ppm
Total Suspended Particulates (TSP) (P.M. < 10)	An Geom. Mean 24-Hour		30 ug/m ³ 50 ug/m ³

ppm = Parts per million; ug/m³ = micrograms per cubic-meter;
P.M. < 10 = Particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter.

Standards for emissions from wood burning stoves may be forthcoming because wood burning stoves produce large amounts of particulate matter. However, at the time of adoption of this Plan, the California Energy Commission had not adopted such standards. Some California communities require fireplaces and wood-burning stoves to meet Oregon or Colorado certification standards.

Sources of Pollutants, and Health Risks

Emissions from motor vehicles are the primary source of carbon monoxide, ozone precursors (the chemicals that react to form ozone in the presence of sunlight), and nitrogen dioxide. Large industrial plants, primarily oil refineries, are the major source of sulfur dioxide. Combustion, factories, construction, grading, and demolition create particulate matter (smoke, dust, aerosols, and metallic oxides). Particulate matter of 10 microns or less in size is of greatest concern because it is more easily inhaled.

The regulated pollutants can cause cardiovascular disease and acute and chronic respiratory disease. In addition, ozone can irritate the eyes, reduce visibility, and damage vegetation. Certain population groups, including children, the elderly, the acutely ill, and the chronically ill—especially those with cardiovascular diseases—are particularly sensitive to high concentrations of pollutants. These groups, and the locations and facilities where they spend a substantial amount of time, are referred to as “sensitive receptors.” In Larkspur, sensitive receptors include all residential neighborhoods as well as public and private schools (Redwood High School, Hall Middle School, Larkspur/Corte Madera School where Marin Primary School is located, and St. Patrick’s School), city parks, and private day care centers. (See Figure 5-2 for locations.) Marin General Hospital, schools, parks, and convalescent hospitals in Kentfield and Greenbrae are also “sensitive receptors.”

Climate and Topography

Climate and topography are major influences on air quality. Marin County benefits from constant winds, a marine layer of fog which lifts in the morning hours during the summer, and heavy winter precipitation compared to other parts of the Bay Area. Wind direction is east-west, in alignment with the ridges (Corte Madera Ridge and Southern Heights Ridge in Larkspur). The combination of wind direction and topography allows for constant scouring of the ambient air, resulting in extremely high air quality most of the time. It also means that air pollution generated in Marin County is dispersed to other parts of the Bay Area, underscoring the regional nature of the problem.²⁰

Historic and Current Air Quality

Air quality in the San Francisco Bay Area has improved since the passage of the Clean Air Act in 1970, due mainly to emission controls on autos and to

²⁰ Marin County Environmental Quality Element Draft Technical Report #1, *Air Quality Maintenance in Marin County*, January 1989, page 11.

controls on stationary air pollution sources. Table 7-7 below shows the number of days on which federal or State standards were exceeded at the San Rafael Monitoring Station over the past 10 years. After three incidents in 1978, there were no days in which standards were exceeded until 1988.

Figure 7-7

**Number of Days on Which Federal or State Standards
Were Exceeded at the San Rafael Monitoring Station**

<u>Pollutant</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>1983-1987</u>	<u>1988</u>
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	1	0	0	0	0
Ozone (O ₃)	2	0	0	0	1 (State)
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO ₂)	0	0	0	0	0
Sulfur Dioxide (SO ₂)	0	0	0	0	0
Total Suspended Particulates (TSP) (P.M. < 10)	0	0	0	0	2

Although the table illustrates generally favorable air quality in Marin County, Marin produced an estimated 190 tons of air contaminants every day in 1982. When disaggregated by land use, transportation (vehicles, boats, *etc.*) was estimated to produce 160 tons or 84 percent of the total. Residential, industrial, construction, and agriculture each contributed between six and nine tons a day.²¹ Clearly, vehicle travel is the major source of air pollution in Marin County. Although carbon dioxide is not listed above, even a clean-burning engine emits about 5.6 pounds of carbon in the form of carbon dioxide for every gallon of gas it consumes.²²

Air Quality Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goal 10: Ensure that air pollution levels do not threaten public health and safety.

Policy r: Seek to comply with State and federal standards for air quality.

²¹ Marin Countywide Plan Draft Environmental Quality Element, January 1989, page 2-10.

²² *The End of Nature*, Bill McKibben, 1989.

Policy s: Seek to reduce auto travel and, thereby, the pollutants from auto emissions.

Since most readily available pollution control “hardware” has already been applied to stationary sources and motor vehicles, a reduction in auto travel may be the only way to improve air quality in the Bay Area. This could require fundamental changes in land use and travel patterns. Larkspur is almost built out, so significant land use changes are not likely to occur. However, the Larkspur Circulation Goals, Policies, and Programs strongly advocate a reduction in the number of single-occupant auto trips. Alternative modes of transportation, such as transit and bicycles, are encouraged, and a Transportation Demand Management ordinance is proposed. The Circulation and Land Use chapters also encourage mixed uses and neighborhood shopping centers to reduce auto trips.

Policy t: Ensure that traffic generated by new development is not the cause of state and federal air quality standards being exceeded in Marin County.

Action Program [37]: Require new development to mitigate impacts if the project causes a change in the level of air pollutants by a specified amount.

The City will work with the BAAQMD to identify other measures which Larkspur might impose.

NOISE

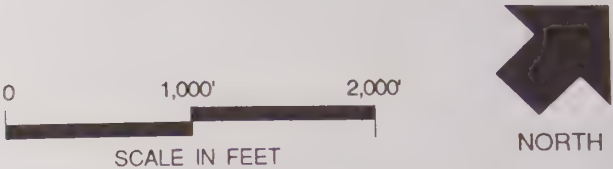
Noise is unwanted sound. Traffic is the main source of noise in Larkspur. Noise measurements taken in 1982 found noise levels to be highest near major traffic generators and quietest at locations remote from major traffic sources.

An understanding of the location and sources of noise in Larkspur is important to land use and transportation policies, and therefore the land use and circulation sections of the General Plan. “Sensitive” land uses (housing, schools, hospitals) should be located away from high noise levels, or, if that’s not practical, protected from them. Since traffic is the major noise generator, policies that will increase or decrease traffic will affect the noise environment of adjacent land uses. Noise is also a factor in open space planning because noise can adversely affect the enjoyment of quiet activities in those areas.

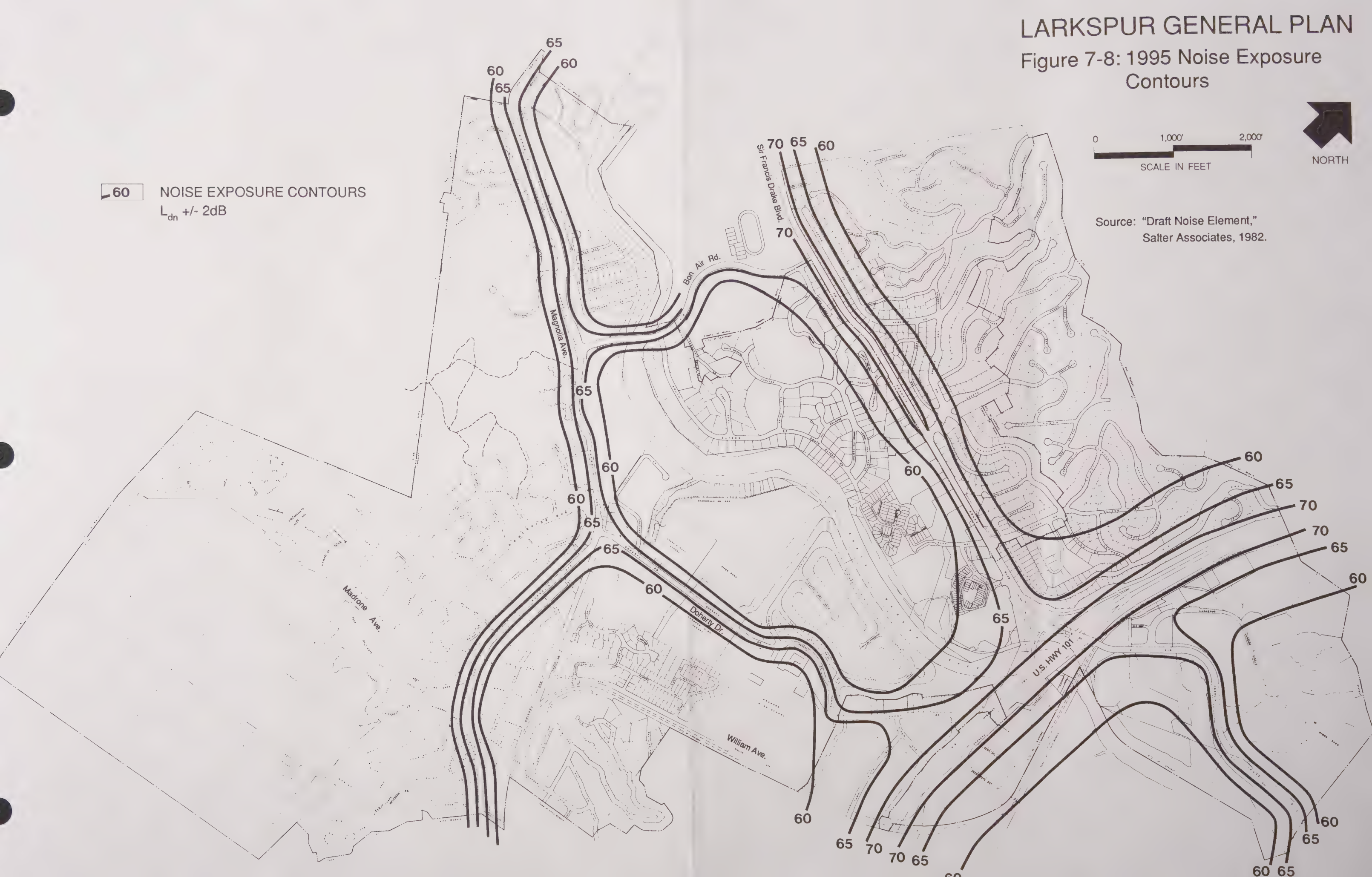
LARKSPUR GENERAL PLAN

Figure 7-8: 1995 Noise Exposure
Contours

60 NOISE EXPOSURE CONTOURS
 $L_{dn} \pm 2dB$



Source: "Draft Noise Element,"
Salter Associates, 1982.



Noise measurements were made at nine locations throughout the City in July 1982. Measurements taken in three general areas since then (for Environmental Impact Reports prepared in 1987 and 1988 for Creekside and the Landmark Building) show no measurable change. (All measurements have a one or two decibel margin of error.) Besides showing actual noise levels in various locations, these measurements were used to validate noise contours developed for the City's major arterials. The noise contours were modeled (not actually measured) using information on average daily traffic, peak and off-peak travel speeds, distribution of traffic by hour of the day, and the percentage of trucks on a given street.

The noise contours are shown in terms of the day/night average noise level (L_{dn}), which is the measurement commonly used in Environmental Impact Reports.

Noise contours were also modeled for 1990 (with a notation that they would be accurate at least through 1995). See Figure 7-8. The 1990–95 noise contours were based on projected future traffic, which is not significantly different from the future traffic projected under this General Plan in terms of how it affects the noise contours.

The locations of the contours do not take into account shielding provided by terrain, buildings, or intervening walls. The contours therefore represent “worst case” conditions. For example, the contours indicate a noise level of about 65 L_{dn} at Site 1 (Via la Cumbre), but the actual noise measurement was 56 L_{dn} . At this location, Highway 101 is depressed relative to the homes along Via la Cumbre, and the cut slope reduces the noise levels. The same phenomenon was demonstrated when noise measurements were taken for the Lincoln Terraces project. The noise measurement at the site closest to Highway 101 was lower than at others farther away because the location is shielded from traffic noise by the old quarry walls.

Exterior Noise Levels and Land Use Compatibility

Over the years many studies have been performed to determine how much noise is acceptable for different land uses. Figure 7-9, “Land Use Compatibility Standards,” shows the noise levels that are acceptable for various land use categories. The chart indicates that a land use can be made compatible with a range of noise levels if the necessary noise reduction features are included in its design. This table helps planners in making preliminary determinations about the suitability of a proposed project located in an area where there is information about the noise environment (e.g., from noise contours or noise measurements).

California Noise Insulation Standards require preparation of an acoustical report for multiple-family dwellings proposed in areas where the L_{dn} exceeds 60 dBA. The report must show how the project will be designed to reduce the noise level to at least 45 dBA in habitable rooms. Typical buildings with their windows open provide an exterior-to-interior noise reduction of about 15 dB. In areas where the exterior noise level exceeds an L_{dn} of 60 dB, other noise reduction measures must be employed (see *Construction Modifications* on page 151). No standards have been established for acceptable outdoor areas in multiple-family developments, but State Noise Element Guidelines recommend 60 dB as the upper limit for acceptable levels.

Figure 7-9: Land Use Compatibility Standards

LAND USE CATEGORY	COMMUNITY NOISE LEVEL							INTERPRETATION
	Ldn or CNEL, dB							
	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	
Residential—Single Family Duplex, Mobile Home								<p> NORMALLY ACCEPTABLE</p> <p>Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements.</p> <p> CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTABLE</p> <p>New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning will normally suffice.</p> <p> POTENTIALLY UNACCEPTABLE</p> <p>New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design. Outdoor areas must be shielded.</p> <p> NORMALLY UNACCEPTABLE</p> <p>New construction or development should generally not be undertaken. Construction costs to make the indoor environment acceptable would be prohibitive and the outdoor environment would not be usable.</p>
Residential—Multi-Family								
Transient Lodging—Motel, Hotel								
School, Library, Church, Hospital, Nursing Home								
Auditorium, Concert Hall, Amphitheatre								
Sports Arena, Outdoor Spectator Sports								
Playground, Neighborhood Park								
Golf Course, Stable, Water Recreation, Cemetery								
Office Building, Business, Commercial & Professional								
Industrial, Manufacturing, Utilities, Agriculture								

Noise Source Characteristics

The land use/noise compatibility recommendations should be viewed in relation to the specific source of the noise. For example, aircraft and railroad noise is normally made up of higher single noise events than auto traffic, but occurs less frequently. Therefore, different sources yielding the same composite noise exposure do not necessarily create the same noise environment.

Suitable Interior Environments

One objective of locating both single and multi-family residential units relative to a known noise source is to maintain a suitable interior noise environment at no greater than 45 dB CNEL or Ldn. This requirement, coupled with the measured or calculated noise reduction performance of the type of structure under consideration, should govern the minimum acceptable distance to a noise source.

Source: State of California, Office of Noise Control, 1975, as modified by City of Larkspur, 1982.

Comparable State standards do not exist for commercial development. However, an interior noise level of 40 to 45 dB is generally considered acceptable for an office environment during working hours.

Besides traffic, other noise sources have been identified as common problems in Larkspur. Unmuffled or improperly muffled motor vehicles are some of the most annoying sources in any community. Not only are these vehicles annoying, they are illegal. Identification of unmuffled vehicles and/or vehicles with modified exhaust systems is easy, and it should be the routine procedure of the Police Department to cite all offenders.

Barking dogs, especially during the night, are particularly annoying. The Environmental Protection Agency has developed a training procedure which has been very successful in teaching dogs not to bark. It is included in Larkspur's 1982 Draft Noise Element as Appendix C.

The use of power tools can be controlled through a noise ordinance which, in part, restricts their use to certain hours of the day—8 AM to 10 PM during weekdays and 9 AM to 9 PM on weekends. A noise ordinance could also control amplified music, public address system, radios, and other electronic noise sources.

Early morning garbage pick-up can be a problem. The City should encourage the scavenger company to consider the purchase of quiet trucks when upgrading or expanding their fleet. Additionally, the City should review new projects to determine whether approval will result in earlier garbage pickups in existing neighborhoods.

Noise Goals, Policies, and Programs

Goal 11: Reduce the adverse effects of noise upon persons living or working in Larkspur.

Policy u: Ensure that all new living and work areas are developed with acceptable noise environments.

Action Program [38]: Maintain the following standards for noise levels in new residential developments.

- a. Indoor noise levels should not exceed 45 dBA.
- b. Outdoor noise levels should not exceed 55 dBA.

Noise can be reduced through site planning, architectural layout, noise barriers, and construction modifications.

Site Planning. By taking advantage of the natural shape and contours of the site, it is often possible to arrange buildings and other facilities to reduce and possibly eliminate noise impacts. Planned unit developments are particularly conducive to site planning techniques.

Architectural Layout. Bedrooms will be considerably quieter if placed on the side of the house facing away from a roadway. Similarly, balconies facing roadways should be avoided. Quiet outdoor spaces can be provided by creating a U-shaped development that faces away from the roadway.

Noise Barriers. Noise barriers must be massive enough to prevent significant noise transmission through them and high enough to shield the receiver from the noise source. While effective—because of their massiveness—noise walls are not appropriate in all locations. They work well along freeways and in larger developments. Access doors should be placed in the walls at regular intervals for use during emergencies.

Construction Modifications. In general, windows and doors are the acoustical “weak links” in a building. If other noise reduction measures are not sufficient, sealed windows on the noisy side of the building and an alternate means of ventilating the building may help. Beyond this, thicker window panes or double-glazed windows will be required. Doors should face away from the noise source. They should be solid-core and equipped with an appropriate acoustical door gasket.

Policy v: For non-residential projects, use the “Land Use Compatibility Standards,” Figure 7-9, to evaluate their suitability in particular locations.

Action Program [39]: Require acoustical studies for all projects that would be exposed to noise levels in excess of those deemed normally acceptable, as defined in Figure 7-9.

Action Program [40]: Require thorough noise assessments in all environmental analyses of major projects.

Goal 12: Reduce noise levels in areas where the existing noise exceeds “normally acceptable” levels, to levels compatible with land uses in those areas, as defined in Figure 7-9, “Land Use Compatibility Standards.”

Policy w: Promote educational efforts that will encourage the citizens of Larkspur to improve their noise environments.

Policy x: Control unnecessary, excessive, and annoying noises within the city, where not preempted by federal or State control.

Action Program [41]: Adopt a noise ordinance.

Policy y: Enforce applicable federal and State laws.

Action Program [42]: Enforce the provisions of the California Motor Vehicle Code pertaining to vehicle noise emission.

Policy z: Support programs to reduce community noise levels where possible within the “normally acceptable” categories shown in Figure 7-9.

Action Program [43]: Work with neighboring communities to ensure compliance with Larkspur’s land use and noise compatibility standards at the city’s boundaries.

Goal 13: Prevent the escalation of noise levels in areas where noise-sensitive uses exist.

Policy aa: Analyze in detail the potential noise impacts of any actions the City may take that could significantly alter noise levels in the community.

Action Program [44]: Review all public works projects for potential noise impact.

Action Program [45]: Consider noise emission when purchasing vehicles, construction equipment, etc. This consideration shall be balanced against the required performance and cost.

Policy ab: Encourage creative solutions when potential conflicts arise between noise levels and land use. □

Chapter 8. Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails and Paths

A network of hiking and biking trails is available to Larkspur residents. These trails provide a non-vehicular circulation system in the city and link residents with open space and neighboring communities.

Many links in the system are not secured, however. As land is developed for residential and other uses, there is danger that existing, informal trails could be closed to the public. Still other trails, which offer the opportunity to link parts of the trails system, remain undeveloped.

The principal purpose of this chapter is to plan and secure a complete and citywide system of trails and paths that will link sections of Larkspur to one another and to neighboring communities and open space areas. This chapter identifies trails of citywide significance that need to be preserved and provides basic tools for implementing a complete system. The chapter has been coordinated with the Marin Countywide Trails Plan by the Larkspur Park and Recreation Commission. It is not intended to serve as a guide for trail users. Precise plans for trails and paths will be developed in an updated Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities

Larkspur is well served by bicycle and pedestrian facilities. Although some of the older neighborhoods do not have sidewalks, newer developments do. About 3 percent of Larkspur residents walk to work.

Bicycle paths in Larkspur are oriented mainly to serve students (including elementary, middle, and high school, and College of Marin students), and for recreation. A few residents—the 1980 census indicates less than 1 percent—bicycle to work. There is also considerable recreational travel by adult bicyclists through Larkspur, especially on weekends.

Figure 8-2, the Bicycle/Pedestrian Circulation Plan at the end of this chapter, shows the location of existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities in Larkspur and indicates which connections are still to be secured.

In general, multi-purpose paths—accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians—have worked well in Larkspur. Following are two examples of such paths:

One parallels Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, from the eastern Larkspur City Limit, westward on an extra-wide sidewalk, past the ferry terminal, under the Greenbrae interchange with Highway 101, and behind Drake's Landing and Bon Air Shopping Center to an end at the western terminus of South Eliseo. This path has two spurs across Corte Madera Creek parallel to Highway 101.

The second path follows the old Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way east of Magnolia from William Avenue, northward through the Downtown area to Doherty Drive. The path crosses Doherty Drive in the crosswalk, and continues along a dedicated path on Magnolia Avenue north of the intersection, along the new Creekside development. The dedicated path disappears near Bon Air Road, and signs advise bicyclists to walk their bikes over the bridge across Corte Madera Creek. There, the path splits in two—one fork follows the creek to the College of Marin and the Town of Ross, and the other takes a more northerly tack to Bacich School. On the west side of Corte Madera Creek, the bike trail shares a narrow sidewalk with pedestrians through the North Magnolia area.

All the bicycle trails are open to pedestrians. There are several hiking-only trails in Larkspur as well. These are mostly in the hills that lead up to the Corte Madera ("North") Ridge. Another pedestrian-only facility runs along the Bay shore in Remillard Park.

Many of the designated bicycle facilities in Larkspur are actually sidewalks signed as bike paths. In some cases, they are only three or four feet wide, far too narrow for a shared facility. Examples of these are on North Magnolia Avenue, and on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, between Eliseo Street and Wolfe Grade. It would be physically difficult and costly to acquire land or easements and build better paths in these areas. Therefore, many of the existing links will probably have to remain as connectors in the city's system of paths and trails. Bicycles should therefore continue to be allowed on sidewalks, except Downtown, between Doherty Drive and William Avenue, where an alternate path is available along the former NWP right-of-way.

In addition to these paths and trails, there are several "paper streets" in Larkspur that continue to provide pedestrian access in some of the hilly neighborhoods. These streets were platted—without regard for terrain—as part of an early survey of Larkspur. They remain as paths and staircases, but are not well maintained. Another survey is needed to evaluate their usefulness in the overall path system.

The Bay Trail runs through the City of Larkspur along the east and west sides of Highway 101 from Corte Madera to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, and along Sir

Francis Drake Boulevard to the Richmond Bridge. This proposed 400-mile trail system will provide pedestrian and bicycle paths along San Francisco and San Pablo Bays. The Pacific Coast Bicentennial Bicycle Route passes through Larkspur along Magnolia Avenue. In 1990, City staff was studying moving the route to the NWP railroad path.

The city's newest dedicated bicycle/pedestrian facilities were constructed in 1989. One is a path linking William Avenue with Lucky Drive, through the Redwood High School campus. The other was built as part of the Creekside project, and loops around its east side.

Handicap access to paths is important and should be considered—wherever feasible—as new paths are planned.

The many existing and narrow roads and the constraints of existing development preclude the overall paths plan from providing separate routes restricted to bikes. In general, development of multi-purpose trails is most reasonable for Larkspur.

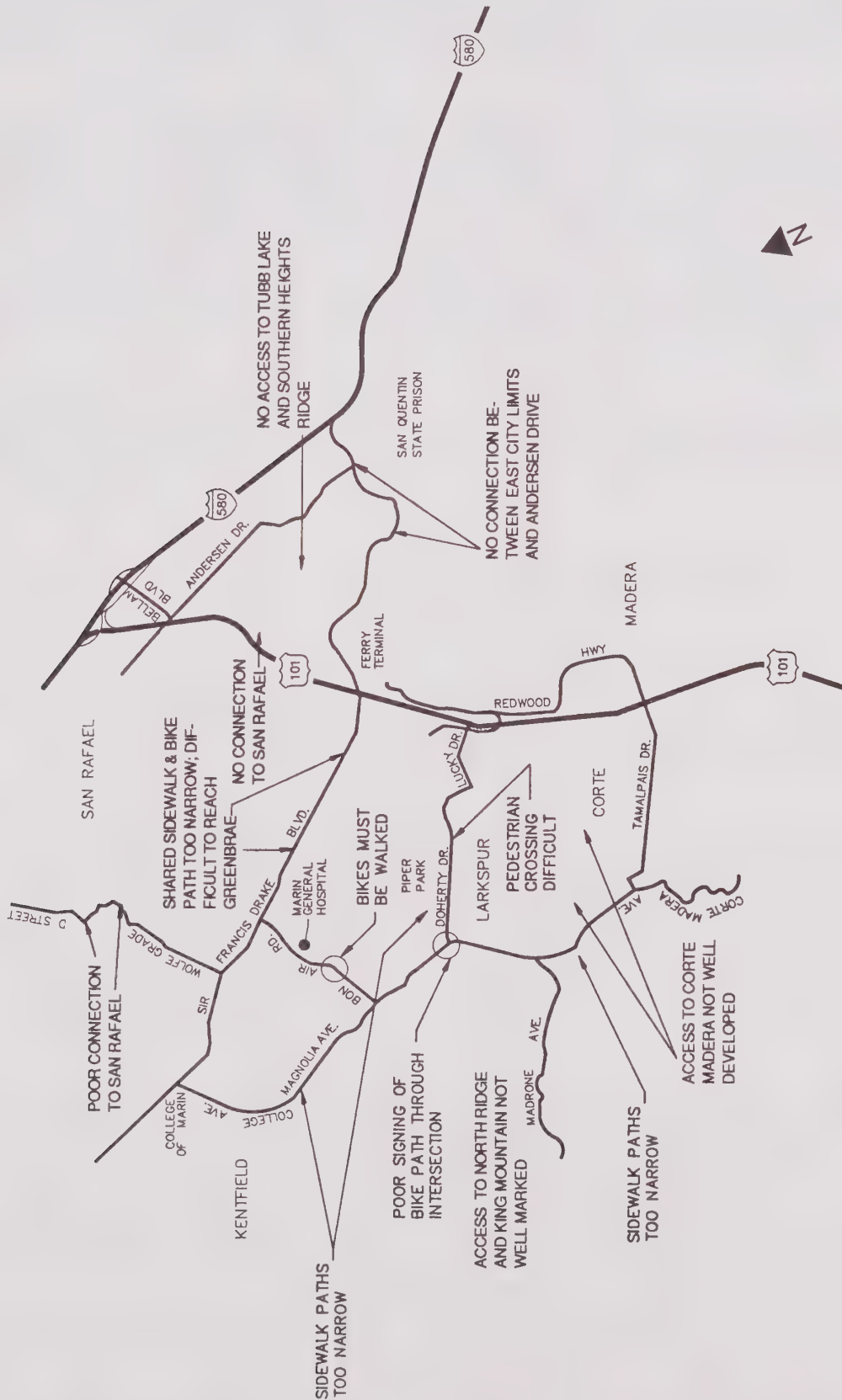
Constraints to Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation

Unlike motorized travel, system capacity is rarely a problem for bicyclists and pedestrians. Rather, the problems usually involve inadequate or missing linkage between existing paths and trails, missing or unclear access to destinations, inconsistent design standards, and safety.

Safety is the first and major consideration. Bicyclists should feel safe and comfortable traveling on the same roads as motor vehicles. Similarly, where there are no sidewalks, pedestrians should feel safe sharing the road with cars. When conditions are not favorable to smooth circulation of bicycle and pedestrian traffic, a “constraint” is said to exist. There are several such constraints in Larkspur. (See Figure 8-1 on page 156.) Some of the constraints which have been identified are:

- Bicycle riding on the Bon Air Road bridge over Corte Madera Creek is prohibited. Bikes must be walked on the sidewalk. The intersection with Magnolia Avenue and Bon Air Road also is confusing for bikes.
- Pedestrians and cyclists traveling along South Eliseo Drive and Corte Madera Creek between the Bon Air multi-purpose path and Bon Air Road must use the sidewalk—where available—or the road.

**Figure 8-1:
Constraints to Bicycle and Pedestrian Travel**



- Except for the shared sidewalk access described above, there is no comfortable way to get to the neighborhoods in Greenbrae along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.
- The NWP -rail-corridor bike path in the southbound direction across Doherty Drive is not signed. It is not clear where the bicycle facility continues. Similar signing problems occur at the south end of the NWP bike path, where there are shared roadway connections with William and Magnolia Avenues.
- The sidewalk bike paths along north Magnolia Avenue are too narrow for their intended use. Alternatives should be investigated.
- Pedestrians crossing Doherty Drive, especially when school begins and ends, find it difficult because of the steady volume of traffic. School crossing-guards ease this situation somewhat.
- Doherty Drive, north of the Redwood High School buildings, is narrow and therefore difficult for pedestrians and bicyclists to travel. Although there are signs routing pedestrians and bicyclists through the Redwood High School parking lot, the pathways have never been clearly defined or marked.

In addition to the constraints in the bicycle and pedestrian circulation system listed above, there are areas where improvements would help to link parts of Larkspur, other communities, and open space areas. Some of those which have been identified are:

- Access to San Rafael could be improved (1) at Andersen Drive and East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard; (2) along the railroad right-of-way adjacent to Highway 101; and (3) along Wolfe Grade.
- Access to the town Corte Madera is not well developed.
- Access points to trails in the North Ridge and King Mountain are not well marked. If more access points were identified, hikers would not make an undue impact on any one neighborhood or residence.
- Access to Tubb Lake and the Southern Heights (San Rafael) Ridge has not been secured.

TRAILS AND PATHS GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Goal 1: **Make it easier to travel around Larkspur by non-motorized transportation modes.**

Policy a: Develop a comprehensive and coordinated trails and paths system that serves both recreational and utilitarian travel.

Action Program [1]: Require the submittal of a trails and paths plan for all new development or redevelopment.

Policy b: Fill gaps in the existing path system.

Action Program [2]: Implement the Bicycle/Pedestrian Circulation Plan shown on Figure 8-2.

Figure 8-2 is to be used by the City in reviewing new development and redevelopment proposals to ensure that the Bicycle/Pedestrian Circulation Plan is implemented. Any regional plans for trails and paths, and all development and redevelopment proposals, will be referred to the City's Park and Recreation Commission as may be necessary to confirm or modify alignments and details. Specific improvements would include, but not be limited to:

- Explore widening Bon Air Bridge to allow bicyclists to ride across.
- Explore a pedestrian/bicycle bridge to link the areas north and south of Corte Madera Creek between the existing bridges at Bon Air Road and Highway 101.

Corte Madera Creek is a natural boundary that separates the north and south portions of Larkspur. There are only three ways to cross in and around Larkspur: College Avenue, Bon Air Road, and U.S. 101. The separation between parts of Larkspur is most acute for bicyclists and pedestrians, who are most sensitive to roundabout routing. It is important to assure that Larkspur cooperates with its neighbors in planning new local circulation routes.

Policy c: Inventory and upgrade signing and access to trails and paths.

Action Programs 3–6 below propose new signs where needs have been identified. The inventory proposed in Policy "c" will identify additional needs and actions.

Action Program [3]: Sign Magnolia Avenue as an on-street bicycle route from College to Bon Air Road (on the west side) and from College to Dartmouth/ Skylark (on the east side).

Action Program [4]: Sign the sidewalk from Dartmouth/Skylark to Bon Air Road on the northbound side as a bike path.

This sidewalk path is less constrained than sidewalks at other locations, and should be able to handle the two uses.

Action Program [5]: Sign South Eliseo Drive as an on-street bike route.

Action Program [6]: Improve signs along William Avenue from Magnolia Avenue to the Community Fields path at Redwood High School.

Policy d: Survey the “paper streets” of Larkspur to evaluate their usefulness in an overall path system, and preserve those “paper streets” identified as useful for paths.

Action Program [7]: When possible and appropriate, upgrade and improve the “paper streets” of Larkspur for use by the public as trails or paths.

Goal 2: Provide safe bicycle and pedestrian routes for all users, to schools, shopping and business areas, recreation facilities, open space preserves, and other communities, and associated amenities.

Policy e: Locate and design pedestrian and bike trails separate from streets and automobile traffic wherever possible. Designate on-street bike lanes where off-road paths are not possible.

Action Program [8]: Require new development or redevelopment to provide appropriate sidewalks or paths.

Action Program [9]: Require, by ordinance, bike racks in commercial and park and recreation areas, and outside schools and other public buildings.

Action Program [10]: Install signs to mark the location of water fountains and public toilets near bicycle facilities.

The signs will assist bicyclists and pedestrians unfamiliar with particular routes.

Policy f: Freeway improvements should include protected crossings for pedestrians and bicycles.

Goal 3: Coordinate existing and planned bicycle and pedestrian routes with the circulation plans of neighboring communities and the County.

Policy g: Develop and maintain hiking trails linking Larkspur with trails and open space areas in Marin County and nearby cities.

Action Program [11]: Cooperate with Corte Madera to use the abandoned railroad right-of-way to develop a path from Alexander Avenue to Village Square and from William Avenue to Industrial Way, while protecting the habitat value of the Redwood High School marsh.

Action Program [12]: Coordinate equestrian paths with the Marin Countywide Trails Plan.

Action Program [13]: Secure the abandoned railroad right-of-way west of Highway 101 and along William and Holcomb Avenues for bicycle and pedestrian paths.

Action Program [14]: Improve the path on the NWP right-of-way from William east and south to the Corte Madera city limit.

Policy h: Pursue the potential temporary use of the NWP right-of-way east of Highway 101 for use as a pedestrian and/or bicyclist trail until its use as a transit-way.

Policy i: Secure better trail access to San Rafael.

Trail connections are needed between Tubb Lake and the Southern Heights Ridge; at Andersen Drive and East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard; and along Wolfe Grade.

Goal 4: Reduce the need for long distance and/or frequent shopping travel by private automobile.

This goal is consistent with those in other chapters of the Plan which call for providing neighborhood-serving businesses and keeping the Downtown at a scale that will encourage people to walk or bike to the shops. Most of the policies and programs that would result in attaining this goal are contained in the Land Use chapter. Other policies are:

Policy j: Encourage neighborhood and local consumer services that can be reached by walking and bicycling.

Policy k: Encourage means of travel to and between retail areas other than by private automobile.

Goal 5: Provide hiking trails and access points for public enjoyment and use of open space areas.

Policy l: Provide reasonable access to open space areas via trails and entry points that do not adversely impact adjacent residential areas.

Action Program [15]: Develop guidelines and standards for paths and access.

Action Program [16]: Secure multiple public access points prior to development of areas adjacent to trails and open space lands (e.g., Big and Little King, Tubb Lake/Miwok Park, San Rafael/Southern Heights Ridge).

This concept is important because of the difficulties experienced in clarifying trail access in already established neighborhoods when trails became public (as in Madrone Canyon).

Policy m: Reduce theft, noise, and parking intrusion associated with trails in neighborhoods.

Action Program [17]: Use planting and lighting to discourage parties and similar gatherings at trail entrances.

Policy n: Encourage persons using the hiking trails to walk to trail access points instead of using their automobiles.

Action Program [18]: Allow parking at trail access points only where there is sufficient land area.

Action Program [19]: At trail entrances, provide appropriate gates designed to preclude entry by motorized vehicles (and in some cases, by equestrians).

Goal 6: Provide paths that encourage broad public use.

Policy o: When developing trails and paths, consider the access needs of a variety of users, including school-age children, the elderly, and the handicapped.

Policy p: Develop and adopt design standards to reduce trail user conflicts and protect adjacent environmental resources.

The minimum paved width of most paths should be eight feet. Where more than modest use is anticipated, the paved section should be 10 feet, and an unpaved shoulder 18 inches wide should be provided along each side of the path for joggers.

Policy q: Coordinate with Marin County and its Countywide Trails Plan in developing a policy for mountain bike use of trails and open space areas.

Goal 7: Reduce the number and severity of transportation-related accidents.

The need for safe circulation must be recognized as a priority, even at the expense of circulation efficiency.

Policy r: Provide bicyclists and pedestrians with safe facilities for circulation.

Policy s: Place higher priority on safety as opposed to efficient traffic flow and speed.

Policy t: Identify streets that create a safety problem for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Action Program [20]: Provide opportunities for bicyclists and pedestrians to cross Magnolia Avenue safely, such as additional all-way stop-controlled intersections, actuated traffic signals, or other means.

Action Program [21]: Continue bicycle education programs in schools.

Action Program [22]: Selectively install bicycle/pedestrian safety messages along paths to advise of rules of the road, need for courtesy, and spot hazards.




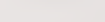


Action Program [23]: Improve the bike route along Doherty Drive.

Visibility, connections, and signage should be improved on this important route.

Action Program [24]: Improve the transition from the sidewalk bike path on Magnolia Avenue, north of Doherty Drive, to the path on the NWP right-of-way.

Action Program [25]: By ordinance, prohibit motor vehicles (except for public safety vehicles) on bike paths and pedestrian trails. □

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Path	(Class 1)		
Lane	(Class 2)		
Route	(Class 3)		



Chapter 9. Glossary of Terms

Abbreviations used in the Plan

ADT:	Average daily trips made by vehicles in a 24-hour period
CAI:	California Archaeological Inventory
CBD:	Central Business District
CDBG:	Community Development Block Grant
CEQA:	California Environmental Quality Act
CHFA:	California Housing Finance Agency
CIP:	Capital Improvements Program
CNEL:	Community Noise Equivalent Level
dB:	Decibel
dBA:	"A-weighted" decibel
DRB:	Design Review Board, City of Larkspur
EIR:	Environmental Impact Report
FAR:	Floor Area Ratio
FEMA:	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM:	Flood Insurance Rate Map
GMI:	Gross Monthly Income
HCD:	Housing and Community Development Department of the State of California
HUD:	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
JPA:	Joint Powers Authority
LAFCo:	Local Agency Formation Commission
Ldn:	Day and Night Average Sound Level
Leq:	Energy Equivalent Level
LOS:	Level of Service
MMWD:	Marin Municipal Water District
PUD:	Planned Unit Development
UBC:	Uniform Building Code
UHC:	Uniform Housing Code
TDM:	Transportation Demand Management
TDR:	Transfer of Development Rights
TSM:	Transportation Systems Management
VMT:	Vehicle Miles Traveled

Acceptable Risk

A hazard which is deemed to be a tolerable exposure to danger given the expected benefits to be obtained. Different levels of acceptable risk may be assigned according to the potential danger and the criticalness of the threatened structure. The levels may range from "near zero" for nuclear plants and natural gas transmission lines to "moderate" for open space, ranches and low-intensity warehouse uses.

Access/Egress

The ability to enter a site from a roadway and exit a site onto a roadway by motorized vehicle.

Acres, Gross

The entire acreage of a site, calculated to the centerline of proposed bounding streets or to the edge of the right-of-way of existing or dedicated streets.

Acres, Net

The portion of a site that can actually be built upon. The following generally are not included in the net acreage of a site: public or private road rights-of-way, public open space, and flood ways.

Affordable Housing

Housing capable of being purchased or rented by a household with very low, low or moderate income, based on a household's ability to make monthly payments necessary to obtain housing. Housing is considered affordable when a household pays less than 30 percent of its gross monthly income (GMI) for housing including utilities.

Agency

The governmental entity, department, office, or administrative unit responsible for carrying out regulations.

Air Pollution

Concentrations of substances found in the atmosphere which exceed naturally occurring quantities and are undesirable or harmful in some way.

Alluvial

Soils deposited by stream action.

Ambient

Surrounding on all sides; used to describe measurements of existing conditions with respect to traffic, noise, air and other environments.

Annex, v.

To incorporate a land area into an existing district or municipality, with a resulting change in the boundaries of the annexing jurisdiction.

Apartment

(1) One or more rooms of a building used as a place to live, in a building containing at least one other unit used for the same purpose. (2) A separate suite, not owner-occupied, which includes kitchen facilities and is designed for and rented as the home, residence, or sleeping place of one or more persons living as a single housekeeping unit.

Appropriate

An act, condition, or state which is considered suitable.

Aquifer

An underground, water-bearing layer of earth, porous rock, sand, or gravel, through which water can seep or be held in natural storage. Aquifers generally hold sufficient water to be used as a water supply.

Archaeological

Relating to the material remains of past human life, culture, or activities.

Architectural Control; Architectural Review

Regulations and procedures requiring the exterior design of structures to be suitable, harmonious, and in keeping with the general appearance, historical character, and/or style of surrounding areas. A process used to exercise control over the design of buildings and their settings. In Larkspur, architectural review is the province of the Design Review Board (DRB). (See "Design Review.")

Arterial

Medium-speed (30–40 mph), medium-capacity (10,000–35,000 average daily trips) roadway which provides intra-community travel and access to the county-wide highway system. Access to arterials should be provided at collector roads and local streets, but direct access from parcels to existing arterials is common. Arterials in Larkspur include Magnolia Avenue, Bon Air Road, Doherty Drive, Redwood Highway, and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

Article 34 Referendum

Article 34 of the Constitution of the State of California requires passage of a referendum within a city or county for approval of the development or acquisition of a publicly financed housing project where more than 49 percent of the units are set aside for low-income households.

Assessment District

(See "Benefit Assessment District.")

Auto Mall

A single location that provides sales space and centralized services for a number of automobile

dealers, and which may include such related services as auto insurance dealers and credit institutions that provide financing opportunities.

Automobile-Intensive Use

A use of a retail area which depends on exposure to continuous auto traffic.

Base Flood

In any given year, a 100-year flood that has 1% likelihood of occurring, and is recognized as a standard for acceptable risk.

Baylands

Areas along a bay that are permanently wet or periodically covered with shallow water, such as saltwater and freshwater marshes, open or closed brackish marshes, swamps, mudflats, and fans.

Below-market-rate (BMR) Housing Unit

Any housing unit specifically priced to be sold or rented to low- or moderate-income households for an amount less than the fair-market value of the unit. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development sets standards for determining which households qualify as "low income" or "moderate income."

Benefit Assessment District

An area within a public agency's boundaries which receives a special benefit from the construction of a public facility. A Benefit Assessment District has no legal life of its own and cannot act by itself. It enables property owners in a specific area to cause the construction of public facilities or to maintain them (for example, a downtown, or the grounds and landscaping of a specific area) or to purchase park or open space area by contributing their fair share of the acquisition, construction, installation, and/or operating costs.

Bicycle Lane (Class II facility)

A corridor expressly reserved for bicycles, existing on a street or roadway in addition to any lanes for use by motorized vehicles.

Bicycle Path (Class I facility)

A paved route not on a street or roadway and expressly reserved for bicycles traversing an otherwise unpaved area. Bicycle paths may parallel roads but typically are separated from them by landscaping.

Bicycle Route (Class III facility)

A facility shared with motorists and identified only by signs, a bicycle route has no pavement markings or lane stripes.

Bikeways

A term that encompasses bicycle lanes, bicycle paths, and bicycle routes.

Biomass

Plant material, used for the production of such things as fuel alcohol and non-chemical fertilizers. Biomass sources may be plants grown especially for that purpose or waste products from livestock, harvesting, milling, or from agricultural production or processing.

Biotic Community

A group of living organisms characterized by a distinctive combination of both animal and plant species in a particular habitat.

Blight

A condition of a site, structure, or area that may cause nearby buildings and/or areas to decline in attractiveness and/or utility.

Buffer Zone

An area of land separating two distinct land uses which acts to soften or mitigate the effects of one land use on the other.

Building

Any structure used or intended for supporting or sheltering any use or occupancy.

Building, Maximum Height

The vertical distance from the average contact ground level of a building to the highest point of the coping of a flat roof or to the deck line of a mansard roof or to the mean height level between eaves and ridge for a gable, hip, or gambrel roof.

Bulldout; Build-out

Development of land to its full potential or theoretical capacity as permitted under current or proposed planning or zoning designations.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

A State law requiring State and local agencies to regulate activities with consideration for environmental protection. If a proposed activity has the potential for a significant adverse environmental impact, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared and certified as to its adequacy before taking action on the proposed project. General Plans require the preparation of a "program EIR."

California Housing Finance Agency (CHFA)

A State agency, established by the Housing and Home Finance Act of 1975, which is authorized to sell revenue bonds and generate funds for the development, rehabilitation, and conservation of low- and moderate-income housing.

Caltrans

California Department of Transportation.

Capital Improvements Program (CIP)

A program, administered by a city government and reviewed by its planning commission, which schedules permanent improvements, usually for a minimum of five years in the future to fit the projected fiscal capability of the local jurisdiction. The program generally is reviewed annually, for conformance to and consistency with the general plan.

Carbon Dioxide

A colorless, odorless, non-poison gas that is a normal part of the atmosphere.

Carbon Monoxide

A colorless, odorless, highly poisonous gas produced by automobiles and other machines with internal combustion engines that imperfectly burn fossil fuels such as oil and gas.

Carrying Capacity

The level of land use, human activity, or development for a specific area that can be accommodated permanently without an irreversible change in the quality of air, water, land, or plant and animal habitats. May also refer to the upper limits beyond which the quality of human life, health, welfare, safety, or community character within an area will be impaired. Carrying capacity usually is used to determine the potential of an area to absorb development.

Central Business District (CBD)

The major commercial downtown center of a community. General guidelines for delineating a downtown area are defined by the U.S. Census of Retail Trade, with specific boundaries being set by the local municipality. The Larkspur CBD boundaries are coterminous with the H (Historic) District, which is approximately one parcel in depth along both sides of Magnolia Avenue from (on the east side of the street) William Avenue to Doherty Drive, and (on the west side of the street) from Madrone Avenue to Post Street.

Channelization

(1) The straightening and/or deepening of a watercourse for purposes of storm-runoff control or ease of navigation. Channelization often includes lining of stream banks with a retaining material such as concrete. (2) At the intersection of roadways, the directional separation of traffic lanes through the use of curbs or raised islands which limit the paths that vehicles may take through the intersection.

City

City, with a capital "C," generally refers to the government or administration of Larkspur. City, with a lower case "c" may mean any city, or may refer to the geographical area of a city (e.g., the city's bikeway system.)

Clustered Development

Development in which a number of dwelling units are placed in closer proximity than usual, or are attached, with the purpose of retaining an open space area.

Cogeneration

The harnessing of heat energy—normally through the burning of waste—to generate electricity.

Collector

Relatively-low-speed (25-30 mph), relatively-low-volume (5,000-20,000 average daily trips) street which provides circulation within and between neighborhoods. Collectors usually serve short trips and are intended for collecting trips from local streets and distributing them to the arterial network.

Commercial

A land use classification which permits facilities for the buying and selling of commodities and services. The 1990 Larkspur General Plan has 5 commercial categories—Administrative and Professional Offices, Commercial, Restricted Commercial, Downtown Commercial, and Industrial and Service Commercial.

Community Child Care Agency

A non-profit agency established to organize community resources for the development and improvement of child care services.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

A grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development.

Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL)

A 24-hour energy equivalent level derived from a variety of single-noise events, with weighting factors of 5 and 10 dBA applied to the evening (7:00 to 10:00 pm) and nighttime (10:00 pm to 7:00am) periods, respectively, to allow for the greater sensitivity to noise during these hours.

Community Park

Land with full public access intended to provide recreation opportunities beyond those supplied by neighborhood parks. Community parks are larger in scale than neighborhood parks but smaller than regional parks.

Community Service Area

A geographic subarea of the city used for the planning and delivery of parks, recreation, and other human services based on an assessment of the service needs of the population in that subarea.

Comparison Goods

Retail goods for which consumers will do comparison shopping before making a purchase. These goods tend to have a style factor and to be "larger ticket" items such as clothes, furniture, appliances and automobiles.

Compatible

Capable of existing together without conflict or ill effects.

Condominium

A structure of two or more units, the interior spaces of which are individually owned; the balance of the property (both land and building) is owned in common by the owners of the individual units.

Congestion Management Plan (CMP)

A mechanism employing growth management techniques, including traffic level of service requirements, development mitigation programs, transportation systems management, and capital improvement programming, for the purpose of controlling and/or reducing the cumulative regional traffic impacts of development. AB 1791, effective August 1, 1990, requires all cities, and counties that include urbanized areas, to adopt and annually update a Congestion Management Plan.

Conservation

The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect. The State mandates that a Conservation Element be included in the General Plan.

Consistent

Free from variation or contradiction. Programs in the General Plan are to be consistent, not contradictory or preferential. State law requires consistency between a general plan and implementation measures such as the zoning ordinance.

Convenience Goods

Retail items generally necessary or desirable for everyday living, usually purchased at a convenient nearby location. Because these goods cost relatively little compared to income, they are often

purchased without comparison shopping.

Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions (CC&Rs)

A term used to describe restrictive limitations which may be placed on property and its use, and which usually are made a condition of holding title or lease.

Criterion

A standard upon which a judgment or decision may be based. (See "Standard.")

Critical Facility

Facilities housing or serving many people which are necessary in the event of an earthquake or flood, such as hospitals, fire, police, and emergency service facilities, utility "lifeline" facilities, such as water, electricity, and gas supply, sewage disposal, and communications and transportation facilities.

Cul-de-sac

A short street or alley with only a single means of ingress and egress at one end and with a large turnaround at its other end.

Cumulative Impact

As used in CEQA, the total impact resulting from the accumulated impacts of individual projects or programs over time.

dB

Decibel; a unit used to express the relative intensity of a sound as it is heard by the human ear.

dBA

The "A-weighted" scale for measuring sound in decibels; weighs or reduces the effects of low and high frequencies in order to simulate human hearing. Every increase of 10 dBA doubles the perceived loudness though the noise is actually 10 times more intense.

Dedication

The turning over by an owner or developer of private land for public use, and the acceptance of land for such use by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses often are made conditions for approval of a development by a city.

Dedication, In lieu of

Cash payments which may be required of an owner or developer as a substitute for a dedication of land, usually calculated in dollars per lot, and referred to as in lieu fees or in lieu contributions.

Density, Control of

A limitation on the occupancy of land. Density can be controlled through zoning in the following ways: use restrictions, minimum lot-size requirements, floor area ratio, land use-intensity ratios, setback and yard requirements, minimum house-size requirements, ratios comparing number and types of housing units to land area, limits on units per acre, and other means. Allowable density often serves as the major distinction between residential districts.

Density, Employment

A measure of the number of employed persons per specific area (for example, employees/acre).

Density, Residential

The number of permanent residential dwelling units per acre of land. Densities specified in the General Plan are expressed in units per gross acre. (See "Acres, Gross.")

Density Bonus

The allocation of development rights that allow a parcel to accommodate additional square footage or additional residential units beyond the maximum for which the parcel is zoned, usually in exchange for the provision or preservation of an amenity at the same site or at another location. Under California law, a housing development that provides 20% of its units for lower income households, or 10% of its units for very low-income households, or 50% of its units for seniors, is entitled to a density bonus. (See "Development Rights, Transfer of.")

Density Transfer

A way of retaining open space by concentrating densities—usually in compact areas adjacent to existing urbanization and utilities--while leaving unchanged historic, sensitive, or hazardous areas. In some jurisdictions, for example, developers can buy development rights of properties targeted for public open space and transfer the additional density to the base number of units permitted in the zone in which they propose to develop.

Design Review; Design Control

The comprehensive evaluation of a development and its impact on neighboring properties and the community as a whole, from the standpoint of site and landscape design, architecture, materials, colors, lighting, and signs, in accordance with a set of adopted criteria and standards. "Design Control" requires that certain specific things be done and that other things not be done. Design Control language is most often found within a zoning ordinance. "Design Review" usually refers to a system set up outside of the zoning ordinance, whereby projects are reviewed against certain standards and criteria by a specially established design review board or committee. (See "Architectural Control.")

Destination Retail

Retail businesses that generate a special purpose trip and which do not necessarily benefit from a high-volume pedestrian location.

Developable Land

Land which is suitable as a location for structures and which can be developed free of hazards to, and without disruption of, or significant impact on, natural resource areas.

Developer

An individual who or business which prepares raw land for the construction of buildings or causes to be built physical building space for use primarily by others, and in which the preparation of the land or the creation of the building space is in itself a business and is not incidental to another business or activity.

Development

The physical extension and/or construction of urban land uses. Development activities include: subdivision of land; construction or alteration of structures, roads, utilities, and other facilities; installation of septic systems; grading; deposit of refuse, debris, or fill materials; and clearing of natural vegetation cover (with the exception of agricultural activities). Routine repair and maintenance activities are exempted.

Development Fee

(See "Impact Fee.")

Development Rights

The right to develop land by a land owner who maintains fee-simple ownership over the land or by a party other than the owner who has obtained the rights to develop. Such rights usually are expressed in terms of density allowed under existing zoning. (See "Interest, Fee" and "Interest, Less-than-fee," and "Development Rights, Transfer of [TDR].")

Development Rights, Transfer of (TDR)

Also known as "Transfer of Development Credits," a program which can relocate potential development from areas where proposed land use or environmental impacts are considered undesirable (the "donor" site) to another ("receiver") site chosen on the basis of its ability to accommodate additional units of development beyond that for which it was zoned, with minimal environmental, social, and aesthetic impacts. (See "Development Rights.")

Discourage

To advise or persuade to refrain from.

Distribution Use

(See "Warehousing Use.")

Diversion

The direction of water in a stream away from its natural course (*i.e.*, as in a diversion that removes water from a stream for human use).

Duet

A detached building designed for occupation as the residence of two families living independently of each other, with each family living area defined by separate fee title ownership.

Duplex

A detached building under single ownership which is designed for occupation as the residence of two families living independently of each other.

Dwelling Unit

A room or group of rooms (including sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation facilities, but not more than one kitchen), which constitutes an independent housekeeping unit, occupied or intended for

occupancy by one family on a long-term basis.

Easement

Usually the right to use property owned by another for specific purposes or to gain access to another property. For example, utility companies often have easements on the private property of individuals to be able to install and maintain utility facilities.

Easement, Conservation

A tool for acquiring open space with less than full-fee purchase, whereby a public agency buys only certain specific rights from the land owner. These may be positive rights (providing the public with the opportunity to hunt, fish, hike, or ride over the land) or they may be restrictive rights (limiting the uses to which the land owner may devote the land in the future.)

Easement, Scenic

A tool that allows a public agency to use an owner's land for scenic enhancement, such as roadside landscaping or vista preservation.

Ecology

The interrelationship of living things to one another and their environment; the study of such interrelationships.

Economic Base

Economic Base theory essentially holds that the structure of the economy is made up of two broad classes of productive effort—basic activities which produce and distribute goods and services for export to firms and individuals outside a defined localized economic area, and nonbasic activities whose goods and services are consumed at home within the boundaries of the local economic area. Viewed another way, basic activity exports goods and services and brings new dollars into the area; non-basic activity recirculates dollars within the area. This distinction holds that the reason for the growth of a particular region is its capacity to provide the means of payment for raw materials, food, and services which the region cannot produce itself and also support the nonbasic activities which are principally local in productive scope and market area. (See "Industry, Basic" and "Industry, Non-basic.")

Economic Development Commission (EDC)

An agency charged with seeking economic development projects and economic expansion at higher employment densities.

Ecosystem

An interacting system formed by a biotic community and its physical environment.

Elderly Housing

Typically one- and two-bedroom apartments designed to meet the needs of persons 62 years of age and older or, if more than 150 units, persons 55 years of age and older, and restricted to occupancy by them.

Emission Standard

The maximum amount of pollutant legally permitted to be discharged from a single source, either mobile or stationary.

Encourage

To stimulate or foster a particular condition through direct or indirect action by the private sector or government agencies.

Endangered Species

A species of animal or plant is considered to be endangered when its prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes.

Energy Benefit, Net

The difference between the energy produced and the energy required for production, including the indirect energy consumed in the manufacture and delivery of components.

Enhance

To improve existing conditions by increasing the quantity or quality of beneficial uses.

Environment

CEQA defines environment as "the physical conditions which exist within the area which will be affected by a proposed project, including land, air, water, mineral, flora, fauna, noise, objects of historic or aesthetic significance." This General Plan uses environment to include social and economic conditions.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

A report that assesses all the environmental characteristics of an area and determines what effects or impacts will result if the area is altered or disturbed by a proposed action. (See "California Environmental Quality Act.")

Erosion

(1) The loosening and transportation of rock and soil debris by wind, rain, or running water. (2) The gradual wearing away of the upper layers of earth.

Exaction

A contribution or payment required as an authorized precondition for receiving a development permit; usually refers to mandatory dedication (or fee in lieu of dedication) requirements found in many subdivision regulations.

Expansive Soils

Soils which swell when they absorb water and shrink as they dry.

Export-employment Use

An activity which produces and/or distributes goods and services for export to firms and individuals outside of Larkspur. (See Economic Base.)

Expressway

A divided multi-lane major arterial street for through traffic with partial control of access and with grade separations at major intersections. There currently is no expressway in Larkspur.

Family

(1) Two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption [U.S. Bureau of the Census]. (2) An individual or a group of persons living together who constitute a *bona fide* single-family housekeeping unit in a dwelling unit, not including a fraternity, sorority, club, or other group of persons occupying a hotel, lodging house or institution of any kind [California].

Fast-food Restaurant

Any retail establishment intended primarily to provide short-order food services for on-site dining and/or take-out, including self-serve restaurants (excluding cafeterias where food is consumed on the premises), drive-in restaurants, and formula restaurants required by contract or other arrangement to offer standardized menus, ingredients, and fast-food preparation.

Fault

A fracture in the earth's crust forming a boundary between rock masses that have shifted.

Feasible

Capable of being done, executed, or managed successfully from the standpoint of the physical and/or financial abilities of the implementer(s).

Feasible, Technically

Capable of being implemented because the industrial, mechanical, or application technology exists.

Finding(s)

The result(s) of an investigation and the basis upon which decisions are made. Findings are used by government agents and bodies to justify action taken by the entity.

Fire Hazard Zone

An area where, due to slope, fuel, weather, or other fire-related conditions, the potential loss of life and property from a fire necessitates special fire protection measures and planning before development occurs.

Fiscal Impact Analysis

A projection of the direct, public costs and revenue resulting from population or employment change to the local jurisdiction(s) in which the change is taking place. Enables local governments to evaluate relative fiscal merits of general plans, specific plans, or projects.

Fiscal Impact Report (FIR)

A report projecting the public costs and revenues that will result from a proposed program or development. (See "Fiscal Impact Analysis.")

Flood, 100-Year

The magnitude of a flood expected to occur on the average every 100 years, based on historical data. The 100-year flood has a 1/100, or one percent, chance of occurring in any given year.

Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM)

For each community, the official map on which the Federal Insurance Administration has delineated areas of special flood hazard and the risk premium zones applicable to that community.

Flood Plain

The relatively level land area on either side of the banks of a stream regularly subject to flooding. That part of the flood plain subject to a one percent chance of flooding in any given year is designated as an "area of special flood hazard" by the Federal Insurance Administration.

Flood Plain Fringe

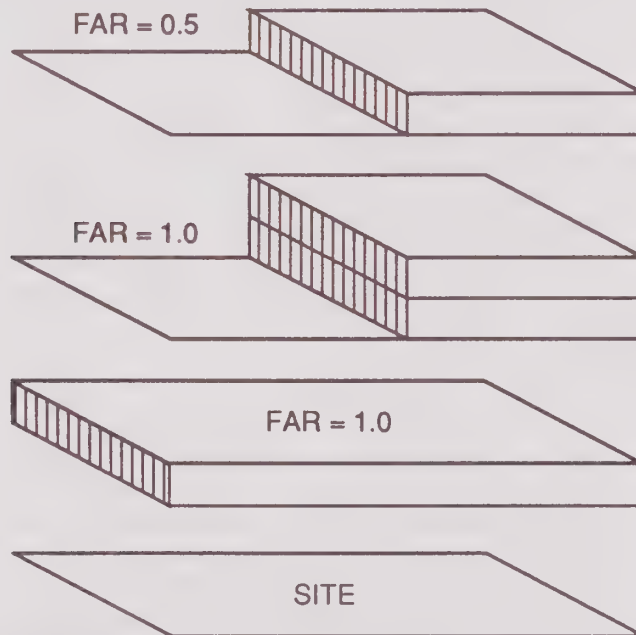
All land between the floodway and the upper elevation of the 100-year flood.

Floodway

The channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas that must be reserved in order to discharge the "base flood" without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than one foot. No development is allowed in floodways. In Corte Madera Creek, the base fresh water flood is entirely contained within the channel (there is no flood plain fringe).

Floor Area Ratio (FAR)

The gross floor area permitted on a site divided by the total net area of the site, expressed in decimals to one or two places. For example, on a site with 10,000 net sq. ft. of land area, a Floor Area Ratio of 1.0 will allow a maximum of 10,000 gross sq. ft. of building floor area to be built. On the same site, an FAR of 1.5 would allow 15,000 sq. ft. of floor area; an FAR of 2.0 would allow 20,000 sq. ft.; and an FAR of 0.5 would allow only 5,000 sq. ft. Also commonly used in zoning, FARs typically are applied to parcels within—as opposed to an average FAR for—an entire land use or zoning district.



Footprint; Building Footprint

The outline of a building at all of those points where it meets the ground.

Freeway

High-speed, high-capacity, limited-access transportation facility serving regional and county-wide travel. Generally used for long trips between major land use generators. Major streets cross at a different grade level.

Gateway

A point along a roadway entering the city at which a motorist gains a sense of having left the environs and of having entered the city.

General Plan

A compendium of the City's policies regarding its long-term development, in the form of maps and accompanying text. The General Plan is a legal document required of each local agency by the State

of California Government Code Section 65301 and adopted by the City Council. In California, the General Plan has 7 mandatory elements (Circulation, Conservation, Housing, Land Use, Noise, Open Space, Safety and Seismic Safety) and may include any number of optional elements (such as Air Quality, Economic Development, Hazardous Waste, and Parks and Recreation). The General Plan may also be called a "City Plan," "Comprehensive Plan," or "Master Plan."

Geologic Review

The analysis of geologic hazards, including all potential seismic hazards, surface ruptures, liquefaction, landsliding, mudsliding, and the potential for erosion and sedimentation.

Geological

Pertaining to rock or solid matter.

Goal

A general, overall, and ultimate purpose, aim, or end toward which the City will direct effort.

Granny Flat

(See "Second Unit.")

Greenhouse Effect

A term used to describe the warming of the Earth's atmosphere due to accumulated carbon dioxide and other gases in the upper atmosphere. These gases absorb energy radiated from the Earth's surface, "trapping" it in the same manner as glass in a greenhouse traps heat.

Groundwater

Water under the earth's surface, often confined to aquifers capable of supplying wells and springs.

Groundwater Recharge

The natural process of infiltration and percolation of rainwater from land areas or streams through permeable soils into water-holding rocks which provide underground storage ("aquifers").

Growth Management

The use by a community of a wide range of techniques in combination to determine the amount, type, and rate of development desired by the community and to channel that growth into designated areas. Growth management policies can be implemented through growth rates, zoning, capital improvement programs, public facilities ordinances, urban limit lines, standards for levels of service, and other programs. (See "Congestion Management Plan.")

Guidelines

General statements of policy direction around which specific details may be later established.

Guideway

A roadway system that guides the vehicles using it as well as supporting them. The "monorail" is one such system. The most familiar and still most used guideway is the railroad. Most guideway transit systems make use of wayside electrical power for propulsion.

Habitat

The physical location or type of environment in which an organism or biological population lives or occurs.

Handicapped

A person determined to have a mobility impairment or mental disorder expected to be of long or indefinite duration. Many such impairments or disorders are of such a nature that a person's ability to live independently can be improved by appropriate housing conditions.

Hazardous Material

Any material that, because of its quantity, concentration, or physical or chemical characteristics, poses a significant present or potential hazard to human health and safety or to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment. The term includes, but is not limited to, hazardous substances and hazardous wastes.

High-Occupancy Structure

All pre-1935 buildings with over 25 occupants, and all pre-1976 buildings with over 100 occupants.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV)

Any vehicle other than a driver-only automobile (e.g., a vanpool, a bus, or two or more persons to a car).

Highway

High-speed, high-capacity, limited-access transportation facility serving regional and county-wide

travel. Highways may cross at a different grade level.

Hillsides

Land which has an average percent of slope equal to or exceeding fifteen percent.

Historic; Historical

An historic building or site is one which is noteworthy for its significance in local, state, or national history or culture, its architecture or design, or its works of art, memorabilia, or artifacts.

Historic Preservation

The preservation of historically significant structures and neighborhoods until such time as, and in order to facilitate, restoration and rehabilitation of the building(s) to a former condition.

Home Occupation

A commercial activity conducted solely by the occupants of a particular dwelling unit in a manner incidental to residential occupancy.

Hotel

A structure in which there are five (5) or more guest rooms or suites where lodging with or without meals is provided for compensation and where no provision is made for cooking in any individual guest room or suite.

Household

All those persons—related or unrelated—who occupy a single housing unit. (See “Family.”)

Households, Number of

The count of all year-round housing units occupied by one or more persons. The concept of “household” is important because it is the formation of new households that generates the demand for housing. Each new household formed creates the need for one additional housing unit or requires that one existing housing unit be shared by two households. Thus household formation can continue to take place even without an increase in population, and thereby increase the demand for housing.

Housing and Community Development Department of the State of California (HCD)

The State agency that has principal responsibility for assessing, planning for, and assisting communities to meet the needs of low- and moderate- income households.

Housing and Urban Development, U.S. Department of (HUD)

A cabinet-level department of the federal government which administers housing and community development programs.

Housing Unit

The place of permanent or customary abode of a person or family. A housing unit may be a single-family dwelling, a multi-family dwelling, a condominium, a modular home, a mobile home, a cooperative, or any other residential unit considered real property under State law. A housing unit has, at least, cooking facilities, a bathroom, and a place to sleep. It also is a dwelling that cannot be moved without substantial damage or unreasonable cost. (See “Dwelling Unit,” “Family,” and “Household.”)

Hydrocarbons

A family of compounds containing carbon and hydrogen in various combinations. They are emitted into the atmosphere from manufacturing, storage and handling, or combustion of petroleum products and through natural processes. Certain hydrocarbons interact with nitrogen oxides in the presence of intense sunlight to form photochemical air pollution.

Impact

Effect of any direct man-made actions or indirect repercussions of man-made actions on existing physical, social, or economic conditions.

Impact Fee

A fee, also called a development fee, levied on the developer of a project by a city, county, or other public agency as compensation for otherwise-unmitigated impacts the project will produce. California Government Code Section 66000, *et seq.*, specifies that development fees shall not exceed the estimated reasonable cost of providing the service for which the fee is charged. To lawfully impose a development fee, the public agency must verify its method of calculation and document proper restrictions on use of the fund.

Impervious Surface

Surface through which water cannot penetrate, such as roof, road, sidewalk, and paved parking lot. The amount of impervious surface increases with development and establishes the need for drainage

facilities to carry the increased runoff.

Implementation

Actions, procedures, programs, or techniques that carry out policies.

Improvement

The addition of one or more structures or utilities on a vacant parcel of land.

Incubator Space

Retail or industrial space that is affordable to new, low-margin businesses.

Industrial Park

A planned assemblage of buildings designed for "Workplace Use." (See "Workplace Use.")

Industry, Basic

The segment of economic activity that brings dollars to a region from other areas. Traditional examples are manufacturing, mining and agriculture. The products of all of these activities are exported (sold) to other regions. The money thus brought into the local economy is used to purchase locally-provided goods and services as well as items that are not available locally and which must be imported from other regions. Other, less traditional examples of basic industry are tourism, higher education, and retirement activities that also bring new money into a region.

Industry, Non-basic

The segment of economic activity that is supported by the circulation of dollars within a region. Examples are the wholesale, retail, and service functions that supply goods and services to local sources of demand such as businesses, public agencies, and households.

Infill Development

Development of vacant land (usually individual lots or left-over properties) within areas which are already largely developed.

Infrastructure

Public services and facilities, such as sewage-disposal systems, water-supply systems, other utility systems, and roads.

In lieu Fee

(See "Dedication, In lieu of.")

Institutional Use

(1) Privately owned and operated activities which are institutional in nature, such as hospitals, museums, and schools; (2) churches and other religious institutions; and (3) other nonprofit activities of an education, youth, welfare, or philanthropic nature which can not be considered a residential, commercial, or industrial activity.

Inter-agency

Indicates cooperation between or among two or more discrete agencies in regard to a specific program.

Interest, Fee

Entitles a land owner to exercise complete control over use of land, subject only to government land use regulations.

Interest, Less-than-fee

The purchase of interest in land rather than outright ownership; includes the purchase of development rights via conservation, open space, or scenic easements. (See "Development Rights," and "Easement, Scenic.")

Intermittent Stream

A stream that normally flows for at least 30 days after the last major rain of the season and is dry a large part of the year.

Issues

Important unsettled community matters or problems that are identified in a community's general plan and dealt with by the plan's goals, objectives, policies, plan proposals, and implementation programs.

Joint Powers Authority (JPA)

A legal arrangement that enables two or more units of government to share authority in order to plan and carry out a specific program or set of programs that serves both units.

Land Banking

The purchase of land by a local government for use or resale at a later date. "Banked lands" have been used for development of low- and moderate-income housing, expansion of parks, and development of industrial and commercial centers. Federal rail-banking law allows railroads to bank unused rail corridors for future rail use while allowing interim use as trails.

Landmark

Refers to a building, site, object, structure, or significant tree, having historical, architectural, social, or cultural significance and marked for preservation by the local, state, or federal government.

Landscaping

Planting—including trees, shrubs, and ground covers—suitably designed, selected, installed, and maintained as to enhance a site or roadway permanently.

Landslide

A general term for a falling mass of soil or rocks.

Land Use

The occupation or utilization of land or water area for any human activity or any purpose defined in the General Plan.

Land Use Classification

A classification system for the designation of appropriate use of properties. The land use categories used on the 1990 General Plan Land Use map are:

Residential

Open Residential, up to 0.2 dwelling units/gross acre.

Very Low Density, up to 1 dwelling unit/gross acre.

Low Density, up to 5 dwelling units/gross acre.

Medium Density, up to 12 dwelling units/gross acre.

High Density, up to 21 dwelling units/gross acre.

Mobile Home Park, up to 14 dwelling units/gross acre.

Commercial/Industrial

Administrative and Professional Offices. Includes administrative, professional, medical, and business offices.

Restricted Commercial. Provides for neighborhood shopping needs. These uses include "retail"—apparel, art galleries, florists, grocery stores, photo, sporting goods, shoes; "personal services"—shoe repair, dry cleaning; bars and restaurants; and finance, insurance, real estate, administrative, executive, and business offices, and the like.

Commercial. Provides for neighborhood and broader shopping needs. These include uses allowed in *Restricted Commercial* areas, as well as auto accessory stores, carpet stores, catering establishments, department stores.

Downtown. Allows retail and personal service uses similar to those in the *Commercial* category with the aim of enhancing the vitality and character of Downtown. Encourages second-story housing.

Industrial and Service Commercial. Provides for a wide range of general commercial, wholesale, service, and processing uses, including auto sales and repair, gas/fuel, lumber yards, plumbing, heating, and roofing supply shops, processing or assembly, and storage and warehousing.

Public and Government

Schools. Lands owned by school districts.

Public Facilities. State, County, and City facilities, and transit district, water district, and sanitary district facilities and corporation yards.

Open Space

Parkland. Includes City parks and landscaped paths, but not open space, trails, and passive recreation areas.

Open Space. Natural habitats and preserves, on land.

Shoreline/Marsh Conservation. Wetlands, marshes, rocky shorelines.

Educational/Environmental Resources Area. Outdoor athletic and recreation areas where

there may be educational and environmental programs concerning landscaping and horticulture.

Water. Creek channels, San Francisco Bay.

Land Use Element

A required element of the General Plan which uses text and maps to designate the future use or reuse of land within a given jurisdiction's planning area. The land use element serves as a guide to the structuring of zoning and subdivision controls, urban renewal and capital improvements programs, and to official decisions regarding the distribution and intensity of development and the location of public facilities and open space.

Land Use Regulation

A term encompassing the regulation of land in general and often used to mean those regulations incorporated in the General Plan, as distinct from zoning regulations (which are more specific).

Larkspur Planning Area

The Larkspur Planning Area is the land area addressed by the General Plan. Its boundary coincides with the Sphere of Influence which encompasses land both within the City Limits and potentially annexable land. Currently, the San Quentin State Prison and all of the area covered by the Kentfield/Greenbrae Community Plan are within the Larkspur Sphere of Influence, and hence the Larkspur Planning Area.

L_{dn}

Day-Night Average Sound Level. The A-weighted average sound level for a given area (measured in decibels) during a 24-hour period with a 10 dB weighting applied to night-time sound levels. The L_{dn} is approximately numerically equal to the CNEL for most environmental settings.

Lease

A contractual agreement by which an owner of real property (the lessor) gives the right of possession to another (a lessee) for a specified period of time (term) and for a specified consideration (rent).

L_{eq}

The energy equivalent level, defined as the average sound level on the basis of sound energy (or sound pressure squared). The L_{eq} is a "dosage" type measure and is the basis for the descriptors used in current standards, such as the 24-hour CNEL used by the State of California.

Level of Service (LOS)

A scale that measures the amount of traffic a roadway may be capable of handling on a roadway or at the intersection of roadways. Levels range from A to F, with A representing the highest level of service.

Level of Service A

Indicates a relatively free flow of traffic, with little or no limitation on vehicle movement or speed. No vehicle waits longer than one red light.

Level of Service B

Describes a steady flow of traffic, with slight delays in vehicle movement and speed. Drivers begin to feel somewhat restricted.

Level of Service C

Denotes steady, high-volume flow of traffic, with significant limitations on movement and speed. All green time is used.

Level of Service D

The level where traffic nears an unstable flow, in which there is little freedom of movement, queues develop but dissipate rapidly, and short delays will occur.

Level of Service E

Traffic characterized by slow movement and momentary stoppages. This type of congestion is not uncommon at peak traffic hours, with frequent stopping traffic and delays. Vehicles at signalized intersections may have to wait through one or more signal changes. Long queues form upstream from an intersection.

Level of Service F

Describes unsatisfactory traffic flow characterized by "traffic jams" and stoppages of long duration. Vehicles at signalized intersections usually have to wait through one or more signal changes, and "upstream" intersections may be blocked by the long queues.

Liquefaction

The transformation of loose water-saturated granular materials (such as sand or silt) from a solid into a liquid state. A type of ground failure that can occur during an earthquake.

Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo)

A five-member commission within each county, required by State law, which reviews and evaluates all proposals for formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts, and merger of districts with cities. Each county's LAFCO is empowered to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve such proposals. The five LAFCO members generally include two county supervisors, two city council members, and one member representing the general public. Some LAFCOs include members who are directors of special districts.

Lot

(See "Site.")

Lot of Record

A lot which is part of a recorded subdivision or a parcel of land which has been recorded at the county recorder's office containing property tax records.

Low-Income Household

A household with an annual income of no more than 80 percent of the Marin County median household income by household size, as determined by a survey of incomes conducted by the City or by Marin County, or in the absence of such a survey, based on the latest available findings for the County as provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program.

L₁₀

A statistical descriptor indicating peak noise levels—the sound level exceeded 10 percent of the time. It is a commonly used descriptor of community noise, and has been used in Federal Highway Administration standards and the standards of some cities.

Maintain, v.

To keep in an existing state. (See "Preserve, v.")

Manufactured Housing

Houses which are constructed entirely in the factory, and which since 1976 have been regulated by the federal Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Standards under the administration of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). (See "Mobile Home" and "Modular Unit.")

Marquee

Any permanent roofed structure, usually a canopy over an entrance, attached to and supported by a building.

Marsh

Any area designated as marsh or swamp on the largest scale United States Geologic Survey topographic map most recently published. A marsh usually is an area periodically or permanently covered with shallow water, either fresh or saline.

May

That which is permissible.

Mean Sea Level

The average altitude of the sea surface for all tidal stages.

Median Strip

The dividing area, either paved or landscaped, between opposing lanes of traffic on a roadway.

Mercalli Intensity Scale

A subjective measure of the observed effects (human reactions, structural damage, geologic effects) of an earthquake. Expressed in Roman numerals from I to XII.

Microclimate

The climate of a small, distinct area, such as a city street or a building's courtyard; can be favorably altered through functional landscaping, architecture, or other design features.

Mineral Resource

Land on which known deposits of commercially viable mineral or aggregate deposits exist. This designation is applied to sites determined by the State Division of Mines and Geology as being a

resource of regional significance, and is intended to help maintain quarrying operations and protect them from encroachment by incompatible land uses.

Minimize

To reduce or lessen, but not necessarily to eliminate.

Mining

The act or process of extracting resources, such as coal, oil, or minerals, from the earth.

Minipark

Small neighborhood park of approximately one acre or less.

Ministerial (Administrative) Decision

An action taken by a governmental agency which follows established procedures and rules and does not call for the exercise of judgment in deciding whether to approve a project.

Mitigate

To ameliorate, alleviate, or avoid to the extent reasonably feasible.

Mixed-use

Properties on which various uses, such as office, commercial, institutional, and residential, are combined in a single building or on a single site in an integrated development project with significant functional interrelationships and a coherent physical design. A "single site" may include contiguous properties.

Mobile Home

A structure, transportable in one or more sections, built on a permanent chassis and designed for use as a single-family dwelling unit and which (1) has a minimum of 400 square feet of living space; (2) has a minimum width in excess of 102 inches; (3) is connected to all available permanent utilities; and (4) is tied down (a) to a permanent foundation on a lot either owned or leased by the homeowner or (b) is set on piers, with wheels removed and skirted, in a mobile home park under a lease with a minimum period of one year. (See "Manufactured Housing" and "Modular Unit.")

Moderate-income Household

A household with an annual income of between 80 and 120 percent of the Marin County median household income by household size, as determined by a survey of incomes conducted by Marin County, or in the absence of such a survey, based on the latest available findings for the County as provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program.

Modular Unit

A factory-fabricated, transportable building or major component designed for use by itself or for incorporation with similar units on-site into a structure for residential, commercial, educational, or industrial use. A modular unit does not have any chassis for future movement. (See "Mobile Home" and "Manufactured Housing.")

Motel

A structure in which there are five (5) or more guest rooms or suites where lodging with or without meals is provided for compensation. Quite often, provision is made for cooking in individual guest rooms or suites. (See "Hotel.")

Multiple Family Building

A detached building designed and used exclusively as a dwelling by three or more families occupying separate suites.

Multiplier Effect

The recirculation of money through the economy multiplies its impact on jobs and income. For example, money paid as salaries to industrial and office workers is spent on housing, food, clothes and other locally-available goods and services. This spending creates jobs in housing construction, retail stores (e.g., grocery and drug stores) and professional offices. The wage paid to workers in those industries is again re-spent, creating still more jobs. Overall, one job in basic industry in Marin County is estimated to create approximately one more job in non-basic industry.

Must

That which is mandatory.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards

The prescribed level of pollutants in the outside air that cannot be exceeded legally during a specified

time in a specified geographical area.

National Flood Insurance Program

A federal program which authorizes the sale of federally subsidized flood insurance in communities where such flood insurance is not available privately.

National Historic Preservation Act

A 1966 federal law that established a National Register of Historic Places and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and which authorized grants-in-aid for preserving historic properties.

National Register of Historic Places

The official list, established by the National Historic Preservation Act, of sites, districts, buildings, structures, and objects significant in the nation's history or whose artistic or architectural value is unique.

Natural State

The condition existing prior to development.

Necessary

Essential or required.

Need

A condition requiring supply or relief. The City may act upon findings of need within or on behalf of the community.

Neighborhood Park

City-owned land intended to serve the recreation needs of people living or working within one-half mile radius of the park.

Neighborhood Unit

According to one widely-accepted concept of planning, the neighborhood unit should be the basic building block of the city. It is based on the elementary school, with other community facilities located at its center and arterial streets at its perimeter. The distance from the school to the perimeter should be a comfortable walking distance for a school-age child; there would be no through traffic uses. Limited industrial or commercial would occur on the perimeter where arterials intersect. This was the model for American suburban development after World War II.

Nitrogen Oxide(s)

A reddish brown gas that is a byproduct of combustion and ozone formation processes. Often referred to as NOX, this gas gives smog its "dirty air" appearance.

Noise

Any sound which is undesirable because it interferes with speech and hearing, or is intense enough to damage hearing, or is otherwise annoying. Noise, simply, is "unwanted sound."

Noise Attenuation

Reduction of the level of a noise source using a substance, material, or surface, such as earth berms and/or solid concrete walls.

Noise Contour

A line connecting points of equal noise level as measured on the same scale. Noise levels greater than the 60 L_{dn} contour (measured in dBA) require noise attenuation in residential development.

Non-attainment

The condition of not achieving a desired or required level of performance. Frequently used in reference to air quality.

Non-conforming Use

A use which was valid when brought into existence, but by subsequent regulation becomes no longer conforming. "Non-conforming use" is a generic term and includes (1) non-conforming structures (by virtue of size, type of construction, location on land, or proximity to other structures), (2) non-conforming use of a conforming building, (3) non-conforming use of a non-conforming building, and (4) non-conforming use of land. Thus, any use lawfully existing on any piece of property that is inconsistent with a new or amended General Plan, and that in turn is a violation of a zoning ordinance amendment subsequently adopted in conformance with the General Plan, will be a non-conforming use. Typically, non-conforming uses are permitted to continue for a designated period of time, subject to certain restrictions.

Objective

A specific statement of desired future condition toward which the City will expend effort in the context of striving to achieve a broader goal. An objective should be achievable and, where possible, should be measurable and time-specific. The State Government Code (§65302) requires that general plans spell out the "objectives," principles, standards, and proposals of the general plan. "The addition of 100 units of affordable housing by 1995" is an example of an objective.

Office

General business offices, medical and professional offices, administrative or headquarters offices for large wholesaling or manufacturing operations, and research and development.

Open Space Land

Any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use for the purposes of (1) the preservation of natural resources, (2) the managed production of resources, (3) outdoor recreation, or (4) public health and safety.

Orchard

A group of fruit trees, either small and diverse for home use, or large and uniform (*i.e.*, one variety) for revenue; such a collection must be planted, managed and renewed by the householder or farmer and should not be confused with a naturally occurring grove. Citrus plantations are customarily called groves.

Ordinance

A law or regulation set forth and adopted by a government authority, usually a city or county.

Outdoor Advertising Structure

Any device used or intended to direct attention to a business, profession, commodity, service, or entertainment conducted, sold, or offered elsewhere than upon the lot where such device is located.

Outdoor Recreation Use

A privately owned or operated use providing facilities for outdoor recreation activities.

Overlay

A land use designation on the Land Use Map, or a zoning designation on a zoning map, which modifies the basic underlying designation in some specific manner.

Ozone

A tri-atomic form of oxygen (O₃) created naturally in the upper atmosphere by a photochemical reaction with solar ultraviolet radiation. In the lower atmosphere, ozone is a recognized air pollutant that is not emitted directly into the environment, but is formed by complex chemical reactions between oxides of nitrogen and reactive organic compounds in the presence of sunlight, and becomes a major agent in the formation of smog.

Para-transit

Refers to transportation services which operate vehicles, such as buses, jitneys, taxis, and vans for senior citizens, and/or mobility-impaired.

Parcel

A lot, or contiguous group of lots, in single ownership or under single control, usually considered a unit for purposes of development.

Parking Area, Shared

A public or private parking area used jointly by two or more uses.

Parking Area, Public

An open area, excluding a street or other public way, used for the parking of automobiles and available to the public, whether for free or for compensation.

Parks

Open space lands whose primary purpose is recreation. (See "Community Park." and "Neighborhood Parks.")

Parkway Strip

A piece of land located between the rear of a curb and the front of a sidewalk, usually used for planting low ground cover and/or street trees, also known as "planter strip."

Patio Unit

A detached single family unit typically situated on a reduced-sized lot, which orients outdoor activity

within rear or side yard patio areas for better utilization of the site for outdoor living space.

Payback Period

The number of years required to accumulate savings equal to the value of a proposed investment.

Peak Hour/Peak Period

For any given roadway, a daily, 60-minute period during which traffic volume is highest, usually occurring in the morning and evening commute periods. Where "F" Levels of Service are encountered, the "peak hour" may stretch into a "peak period" of several hours' duration.

Performance Standards

Zoning regulations that permit uses based on a particular set of standards of operation rather than on particular type of use. Performance standards provide specific criteria limiting noise, air pollution, emissions, odors, vibration, dust, dirt, glare, heat, fire hazards, wastes, traffic impacts, and visual impact of a use.

Personal Services

Services of a personal convenience nature, as opposed to products which are sold to individual consumers, as contrasted with companies. Personal services include barber and beauty shops, shoe and luggage repair, fortune tellers, photographers, laundry and cleaning services and pick-up stations, copying, repair and fitting of clothes, and similar services.

Physical Diversity

A quality of a site, city, or region in which are found a variety of architectural styles, natural landscapes, and/or land uses.

Planned Unit Development (PUD)

A description of a proposed development, consisting at a minimum of a map and adopted ordinance setting forth the regulations governing, and the location and arrangement of all proposed uses and improvements to be included in the development.

Planning and Research, Office of (OPR)

A governmental division of the State of California which has among its responsibilities the preparation of a set of guidelines for use by local jurisdictions in drafting General Plans.

Planning Area

(See "Larkspur Planning Area.")

Planning Commission

A body, usually having five or seven members, created by a city or county in compliance with California law (§65100) which section requires the assignment of the planning functions of the city or county to a planning department, planning commission, hearing officers, and/or the legislative body itself, as deemed appropriate by the legislative body.

Policy

A specific statement of principle or of guiding actions which implies clear commitment but is not mandatory. A general direction that a governmental agency sets to follow, in order to meet its goals and objectives before undertaking an action program. (See "Program.")

Pollutant

Any introduced gas, liquid, or solid that makes a resource unfit for its normal or usual purpose.

Pollution

The presence of matter or energy whose nature, location, or quantity produces undesired environmental effects.

Pollution, Non-Point

Sources for pollution which are less definable and usually cover broad areas of land, such as agricultural land with fertilizers which are carried from the land by runoff, or automobiles.

Pollution, Point

In reference to water quality, a discrete source from which pollution is generated before it enters receiving waters, such as a sewer outfall, a smokestack, or an industrial waste pipe.

Preserve, n.

An area in which beneficial uses in their present condition are protected; for example, a nature preserve or an agricultural preserve. (See "Protect.")

Preserve, v.

To keep safe from destruction or decay; to maintain or keep intact. (See "Maintain.")

Principle

An assumption, fundamental rule, or doctrine that will guide general plan policies, proposals, standards, and implementation measures. The State Government Code (§65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, "principles," standards, and proposals of the general plan. "Adjacent land uses should be compatible with one another" is an example of a principle.

Professional Offices

A use providing professional or consulting services in the fields of law, medicine, architecture, design, engineering, accounting, and similar professions, but not including financial institutions or real estate or insurance offices.

Program

An action, activity, or strategy carried out in response to adopted policy to achieve a specific objective or goal. Policies and programs establish the "who," "how" and "when" for carrying out the "what" and "where" of goals and objectives.

Pro Rata

Refers to the proportionate distribution of the cost of infrastructure improvements associated with new development to the users of the infrastructure on the basis of projected use.

Protect

To maintain and preserve beneficial uses in their present condition as nearly as possible. (See "Enhance.")

Rare or Endangered Species

A species of animal or plant listed in: Sections 670.2 or 670.5, Title 14, California Administrative Code; or Title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, Section 17.11 or Section 17.2, pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act designating species as rare, threatened, or endangered.

Recognize, v.

To officially (or by official action) identify or perceive a given situation.

Recreation, Active

A type of recreation or activity which requires the use of organized play areas including, but not limited to, softball, baseball, football and soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts and various forms of children's play equipment.

Recreation, Passive

Type of recreation or activity which does not require the use of organized play areas.

Recycle

The process of extraction and reuse of materials from waste products.

Redevelopment

The demolition of existing buildings and the construction of new buildings; or an increase in the overall floor area existing on the property; or both—whether or not there is any change in land use.

Regional

Pertaining to activities or economies at a scale, and affecting a broad homogeneous area, greater than that of any one city or county.

Regional Park

A park typically 150-500 acres in size focusing on activities and natural features not included in most other types of parks and often based on a specific scenic or recreational opportunity.

Regulation

A rule or order prescribed for management of government.

Remodeling, Major

Any reconstruction or remodeling, the value of which exceeds 25 percent of the value of the facility prior to the reconstruction or remodeling.

Research and Development Use

A use engaged in study, testing, design, analysis, and experimental development of products, processes, or services.

Residential

Land designated in the City's General Plan and zoning ordinance for buildings consisting only of dwelling units. May be vacant or unimproved. (See "Dwelling Unit.")

Residential, Multiple Family

Three or more dwelling units on a single site, which may be in the same or separate buildings.

Residential, Single-Family

A single dwelling unit on a building site.

Resources, Non-renewable

Refers to natural resources, such as fossil fuels and natural gas, which, once used, cannot be replaced and used again.

Restore

To renew, rebuild, or reconstruct to a former state.

Restrict

To check, bound or decrease the range, scope, or incidence of a particular condition.

Retrofit

The addition of materials and/or devices to an existing building or system to improve its operation or efficiency.

Reverse Annuity Mortgages

A home financing mechanism which enables a homeowner who is a senior citizen to release equity from his or her home. The senior receives periodic payments which can be put to immediate use. Loans are fixed term and are paid when the house is sold or when the term expires.

Rezoning

An amendment of the map and/or text of a zoning ordinance to effect a change in the nature, density, or intensity of uses allowed in a zoning district and/or on a designated parcel or land area.

Richter Scale

A measure of the size or energy release of an earthquake at its source. The scale is logarithmic; the wave amplitude of each number on the scale is 10 times greater than that of the previous whole number.

Rideshare

A travel mode other than driving alone, such as buses, rail transit, carpools, and vanpools.

Ridgeline

A line connecting the highest points along a ridge and separating drainage basins or small-scale drainage systems from one another.

Right-of-way

The strip of land over which certain transportation and public use facilities are built, such as roadways, railroads, and utility lines.

Riparian Lands

Riparian lands are comprised of the vegetative and wildlife areas adjacent to perennial and intermittent streams. Riparian areas are delineated by the existence of plant species normally found near fresh water.

Risk

The danger or degree of hazard or potential loss.

Runoff

That portion of rain or snow which does not percolate into the ground and is discharged into streams instead.

Sanitary Sewer

A system of subterranean conduits which carries refuse liquids or waste matter to a plant where the sewage is treated, as contrasted with storm drainage systems (which carry surface water) and septic tanks or leech fields (which hold refuse liquids and waste matter on-site). (See "Septic System.")

Scenic Highway Corridor

The visible area outside a highway's right-of-way, generally described as "the view from the road."

Scenic Route

A highway, road, drive, or street which, in addition to its transportation function, provides opportunities for enjoyment of natural and man-made scenic resources where aesthetic values are protected and enhanced. Until the mid-1980s, general plans in California were required to include a Scenic Highways element.

School District Lands

Properties owned by public school districts and used for educational, recreational, and administrative purposes.

Second Unit

A self-contained living unit, either attached to or detached from, and in addition to, the primary residential unit on a single lot. Sometimes called "Granny Flat".

Section 8 Rental Assistance Program

A federal (HUD) rent-subsidy program which is the main source of federal housing assistance for low-income households. The program operates by providing "housing assistance payments" to owners, developers, and public housing agencies to make up the difference between the "Fair Market Rent" of a unit (set by HUD) and the household's contribution toward the rent, which is calculated at 30 percent of the household's adjusted gross monthly income (GMI). "Section 8" includes programs for new construction, existing housing, and substantial or moderate housing rehabilitation.

Seiche

An earthquake-generated wave in an enclosed body of water such as a lake, reservoir or bay.

Seismic

Caused by or subject to earthquakes or earth vibrations.

Senior Housing

(See "Elderly Housing.")

Seniors

Persons age 62 and older.

Sensitive Receptors

Certain population groups, including children, the elderly, the acutely ill, and the chronically ill—especially those with cardiovascular diseases—that are vulnerable to air pollutants and noise, and the locations and facilities where these populations spend a substantial amount of time, including their housing, schools, and hospitals.

Septic System

A sewage-treatment system that includes a settling tank through which liquid sewage flows and in which solid sewage settles and is decomposed by bacteria in the absence of oxygen. Septic systems are often used for individual-home waste disposal where an urban sewer system is not available.

Setback

The distance between the property line and any structure.

Settlement

(1) The drop in elevation of a ground surface caused by settling or compacting. (2) The gradual downward movement of an engineered structure due to compaction. *Differential settlement* is uneven settlement, where one part of a structure settles more or at a different rate than another part.

Shall

That which is obligatory or necessary.

Shared Living

The occupancy of a dwelling unit by persons of more than one family in order to reduce housing expenses and provide social contact, mutual support, and assistance. Shared living facilities serving six or fewer persons are permitted in all residential districts by §1566.3 of the California Health and Safety Code.

Shoppers Goods

Another name for comparison goods.

Shopping Center

A group of commercial establishments, planned, developed, owned, or managed as a unit, with off-street parking provided on the site.

Should

Signifies a directive to be honored if at all possible.

Sign

Any representation (written or pictorial) used to identify, announce, or otherwise direct attention to a business, profession, commodity, service, or entertainment, and placed on, suspended from, or in any

way attached to, any structure, vehicle, or feature of the natural or manmade landscape.

Signal Preemption

A system used by emergency vehicles, public transit vehicles and/or trains to change signal phasing from red to green assigning immediate right-of-way for a specific purpose.

Significant Effect

A beneficial or detrimental impact on the environment. May include, but is not limited to, significant changes in an area's air, water, and land resources.

Siltation

(1) The accumulating deposition of eroded material. (2) The gradual filling in of streams and other bodies of water with sand, silt, and clay.

Single-family Dwelling, Attached

A dwelling unit occupied or intended for occupancy by only one household that is structurally connected with other such dwelling units. (See "Family.")

Single-family Dwelling, Detached

A dwelling unit occupied or intended for occupancy by only one household that is structurally independent from any other such dwelling unit or structure intended for residential or other use. (See "Family.")

Single Room Occupancy (SRO)

A single room, typically 80–250 square feet, with a sink and closet, but which requires the occupant to share a communal bathroom, shower, and kitchen.

Site

A parcel of land used or intended for one use or a group of uses and having frontage on a public or an approved private street. A lot.

Slope

Land gradient described as the vertical rise divided by the horizontal run, and expressed in percent.

Soil

The unconsolidated material on the immediate surface of the earth created by natural forces that serves as natural medium for growing land plants.

Solar Access

The provision of direct sunlight to an area specified for solar energy collection when the sun's azimuth is within 45 degrees of true south.

Solar System, Active

A system using a mechanical device, such as a pump or a fan, and energy in addition to solar energy to transport a conductive medium (air or water) between a solar collector and the interior of a building for the purpose of heating or cooling.

Solar System, Passive

A system that uses direct heat transfer from thermal mass instead of mechanical power to distribute collected heat. Passive systems rely on building design and materials to collect and store heat and to create natural ventilation for cooling.

Solid Waste

General category that includes organic wastes, paper products, metals, glass, plastics, cloth, brick, rock, soil, leather, rubber, yard wastes, and wood. Organic wastes and paper products comprise about 75 percent of typical urban solid waste.

Specific Plan

A specific plan is a legal tool for detailed design and implementation of a defined portion of the area covered by a general plan. A specific plan may include all detailed regulations, conditions, programs, and/or proposed legislation which may be necessary or convenient for the systematic implementation of any general plan element(s).

Speed, Average

The sum of the speeds of the cars observed divided by the number of cars observed.

Speed, Critical

The speed which is not exceeded by 85 percent of the cars observed.

Sphere of Influence

The probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local agency (city or district) as

determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) of the County.

Standard

(1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. The State Government Code (§65302) requires that general plans spell out the objectives, principles, "standards," and proposals of the general plan. Examples of standards might include the number of acres of park land per 1,000 population that the community will attempt to acquire and improve, or the "intersection Level of Service" (LOS) that the plan hopes to attain. (2) Requirements in a zoning ordinance that govern building and development as distinguished from use restrictions—for example, site-design regulations such as lot area, height limit, frontage, landscaping, and floor area ratio.

Storm Runoff

Surplus surface water generated by rainfall that does not seep into the earth but flows overland to flowing or stagnant bodies of water.

Street Furniture

Those features associated with a street that are intended to enhance that street's physical character and use by pedestrians, such as benches, trash receptacles, kiosks, lights, newspaper racks, etc.

Street Tree Plan

A comprehensive plan for all city street trees which sets goals for solar access, and standards for species selection, maintenance, and replacement criteria, and for planting trees in patterns that will define neighborhood character while avoiding monotony or maintenance problems.

Streets, Local

(See "Streets, Minor.")

Streets, Major

The transportation network which includes a hierarchy of freeways, arterials, and collectors to service through traffic.

Streets, Minor

Local streets not shown on the Circulation Plan, Map, or Diagram, whose primary intended purpose is to provide access to fronting properties.

Streets, Through

Streets which extend continuously between other major streets in the community.

Structure

Anything constructed or erected which requires location on the ground (excluding swimming pools, fences, and walls used as fences).

Subdivision

The division of a tract of land into defined lots, either improved or unimproved, which can be separately conveyed by sale or lease, and which can be altered or developed. "Subdivision" includes a condominium project as defined in Section 1350 of the California Civil Code or a community apartment project as defined in Section 11004 of the Business and Professions Code.

Subdivision Map Act

Division 2 (Sections 66410 *et seq*) of the California Government code, this act vests in local legislative bodies the regulation and control of the design and improvement of subdivisions, including the requirement for tentative and final maps. (See "Subdivision.")

Subregional

Pertaining to a portion of a region. *E.g.*, Larkspur is part of the southern Marin County sub-region.

Subsidence

The gradual settling or sinking of an area with little or no horizontal motion. (See "Settlement.")

Substandard Housing

Residential dwellings which, because of their physical condition, do not provide safe and sanitary housing.

Substantial

Considerable in importance, value, degree, or amount.

Topography

Configuration of a surface, including its relief and the position of natural and man-made features.

Tourism

The business of providing services for persons traveling for pleasure, tourism contributes to the vitality

of the community by providing revenue to local business. Tourism can be measured through changes in the transient occupancy tax, or restaurant sales.

Traffic Model

A mathematical statement of traffic movement within an area or region based on observed relationships between the kind and intensity of development in specific areas. Many traffic models operate on the theory that trips are produced by persons living in residential areas and are attracted by various non-residential land uses. (See "Trip.")

Transit

The conveyance of persons or goods from one place to another by means of a local, public transportation system.

Transit-dependent

Refers to persons unable to operate automobiles or other motorized vehicles, or those who do not own motorized vehicles. Transit-dependent citizens must rely on transit, para-transit, or owners of private vehicles for transportation. Transit-dependent citizens include the young, the handicapped, the elderly, the poor, and those with prior violations of motor vehicle laws.

Transit, Public

A system of regularly-scheduled buses and/or trains available to the public on a fee-per-ride basis. Also called "Mass Transit."

Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

A strategy for reducing demand on the road system, by reducing the number of vehicles using the roadways and/or increasing the number of persons per vehicle. TDM attempts to reduce the number of persons who drive alone on the roadway during commute period and to increase the number in carpools, vanpools, buses and trains, walking and biking. TDM can be an element of TSM (see below).

Transportation Systems Management (TSM)

A comprehensive strategy developed to address the problems caused by additional development, increasing trips, and a shortfall in transportation capacity. Transportation Systems Management focuses on more efficiently utilizing existing highway and transit systems rather than expanding them. TSM measures are characterized by their low cost and quick implementation time frame, such as computerized traffic signals, metered freeway ramps, and one-way streets.

Trees, Heritage

Trees planted by a group of citizens or by the City in commemoration of an event or in memory of a person figuring significantly in the history of the City.

Trees, Landmark

Trees whose size, visual impact, or association with a historically significant structure or event have led the City to designate them as landmarks.

Trees, Street

Trees strategically planted--usually in parkway strips, medians, or along streets--to enhance the visual quality of a street.

Trip

A one-way journey that proceeds from an origin to a destination via a single mode of transportation; the smallest unit of movement considered in transportation studies. Each trip has one "production end," (or origin—often from home, but not always), and one "attraction end," (destination). (See "Traffic Model.")

Trip Generation

The dynamics that account for people making trips in automobiles or by means of public transportation. Trip generation is the basis for estimating the level of use for a transportation system and the impact of additional development or transportation facilities on an existing, local transportation system. Trip generations of households are correlated with destinations that attract household members for specific purposes.

Truck Route

A path of circulation required for all vehicles exceeding set weight or axle limits, a truck route follows major arterials through commercial or industrial areas and avoids sensitive areas.

Tsunami

A large ocean wave generated by an earthquake in or near the ocean.

Undevelopable

Specific areas where topographic, geologic, and/or surficial soil conditions indicate a significant danger to future occupants and a liability to the City are designated as "undevelopable" by the City.

Undue

Not proper, or more than necessary.

Uniform Building Code (UBC)

A national, standard building code which sets forth minimum standards for construction.

Uniform Housing Code (UHC)

State housing regulations governing the condition of habitable structures with regard to health and safety standards and which provides for the conservation and rehabilitation of housing in accordance with the Uniform Building Code (UBC).

Urban Design

The attempt to give form, in terms of both beauty and function, to selected urban areas or to whole cities. Urban design is concerned with the location, mass, and design of various urban components and combines elements of urban planning, architecture, and landscape architecture.

Urban Open Space

The absence of buildings or development, usually in well-defined volumes, within an urban environment.

Urban Service Area

The outer boundary of where development should occur over the next 5–10 years, given the concerns and municipal service capacities of local government agencies.

Urban Sprawl

Haphazard growth or outward extension of a city resulting from uncontrolled or poorly managed development.

Use

The purpose for which a lot or structure is or may be leased, occupied, maintained, arranged, designed, intended, constructed, erected, moved, altered, and/or enlarged in accordance with the City's zoning ordinance and General Plan land use designations.

Use, Non-conforming

(See "Non-conforming Use.")

Use Permit

The discretionary and conditional review of an activity or function or operation on a site or in a building or facility.

Utility Corridors

Rights-of-way or easements for utility lines on either publicly or privately owned property. (See "Right-of-way" or "Easement.")

Vacant

Lands or buildings which are not actively used for any purpose.

Very Low-Income Household

Very low income households are those earning less than 50 percent of the County median income by household size, as determined by a survey of incomes conducted by the City or by Marin County, or in the absence of such a survey, based on the latest available findings for the County as provided by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the Section 8 housing program. (See "Low-income Household.")

View Corridor

The line of sight—identified as to height, width, and distance—of an observer looking toward an object of significance to the community (e.g., ridgeline, river, historic building, etc.).

Viewshed

The area within view from a defined observation point.

Volume-to-Capacity Ratio

A measure of the operating capacity of a roadway or intersection, in terms of the number of vehicles

passing through, divided by the number of vehicles that theoretically could pass through when the roadway or intersection is operating at its designed capacity. Abbreviated as " V/C ." At a V/C ratio of 1.0, the roadway or intersection is operating at capacity. If the ratio is less than 1.0, the traffic facility has additional capacity. Ratios greater than 1.0 are possible. (See "Level of Service.")

Warehousing Use

A use engaged in storage, wholesale, and distribution of manufactured products, supplies, and equipment, excluding bulk storage of materials which are inflammable or explosive or which present hazards or conditions commonly recognized as offensive.

Wastewater Irrigation

The process by which wastewater that has undergone primary treatment is used to irrigate land.

Watercourse

Natural or once natural flowing (perennially or intermittently) water including rivers, streams, and creeks. Includes natural waterways that have been channelized, but does not include manmade channels, ditches, and underground drainage and sewage systems.

Watershed

The total area above a given point on a watercourse that contributes water to its flow; the entire region drained by a waterway or watercourse which drains into a lake, or reservoir.

Waterway

(See "Watercourse.")

Wetlands

Transitional areas between terrestrial and aquatic systems where the water table is usually at or near the surface, or the land is covered by shallow water. Under a "unified" methodology now used by all federal agencies, wetlands are defined as "those areas meeting certain criteria for hydrology, vegetation, and soils."

Wildlife Refuge

An area maintained in a natural state for the preservation of both animal and plant life.

Workplace Use

The combination of a variety of businesses, from office to research and development to light industry to warehousing, located in structures built with open floor plans, so as to leave most interior improvements to the tenants to design to their needs. (See also "Industrial Park.")

Zero Lot Line

A detached single family unit distinguished by the location of one exterior wall on a side property line.

Zone, Combining

A special purpose zone which is superimposed over the regular zoning map. Combining zones are used for a variety of purposes, such as airport compatibility, flood plain or wetlands protection, historic designation, or special parking regulations. Also called "overlay zone."

Zone, Interim

A zoning designation that temporarily reduces or freezes allowable development in an area until a permanent classification can be fixed; generally assigned during General Plan preparation to provide a basis for permanent zoning.

Zone, Study

(See "Zone, Interim.")

Zoning

The division of a city by legislative regulations into areas, or zones, which specify allowable uses for real property and size restrictions for buildings within these areas; a program that implements policies of the General Plan.

Zoning District

A designated section of the City for which prescribed land use requirements and building and development standards are uniform.

Zoning Bonus

(See "Zoning, Incentive.")

Zoning, Exclusionary

Development regulations which result in the exclusion of low- and moderate-income and/or minority families from a community.

Zoning, Incentive

The awarding of bonus credits to a development in the form of allowing more intensive use of land if public benefits—such as preservation of greater than the minimum required open space, provision for low- and moderate-income housing, or plans for public plazas and courts at ground level—are included in a project.

Zoning, Inclusionary

Regulations which increase housing choice by providing the opportunity to construct more diverse and economical housing to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income families. Often such regulations require a minimum percentage of housing for low- and moderate-income households in new housing developments and in conversions of apartments to condominiums.

Zoning Map

Government Code §65851 permits a legislative body to divide a county, a city, or portions thereof, into zones of the number, shape, and area it deems best suited to carry out the purposes of the zoning ordinance. These zones are delineated on a map or maps, called the Zoning Map.

Zone, Traffic

In a mathematical traffic model the area to be studied is divided into zones, with each zone treated as producing and attracting trips. The production of trips by a zone is based on the number of trips to or from work or shopping, or other trips produced per dwelling unit. □

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Appendix A: Description of Gateways

One's general impression of Larkspur depends on the point from which the community is entered or the place from which the city is observed. Larkspur is entered at six major gateways—one from the east (from East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard alongside San Quentin Prison); one from the north (descending from the Southern Heights Ridge southbound on US Highway 101); two from the west (southbound on College Avenue from the College of Marin, and eastbound on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard from Wolfe Grade Drive); and two from the south (northbound on Magnolia Avenue from Corte Madera, and northbound on US Highway 101 above the NWPRR right-of-way and just south of—before—the Lucky Drive intersection). The visual impressions from each of these six gateways are quite different and are reviewed below:

1. From the east (westbound on East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard past San Quentin Prison)

Coming by car across the bridge from Richmond on Interstate 580, the driver exits onto a ramp and frontage road that parallels the freeway for a little more than half-a-mile. On the right are industrial buildings in San Rafael. On the left is a sparsely wooded hillside. The frontage road swings left and over the I-580 Freeway. On the right are mostly barren hillsides and a major intersection with Andersen Boulevard. On the left can be seen the staff housing, the outer yards, and the high walls of the State prison. A half-mile after having crossed Route 580, the road has descended to the Bay. Immediately in the foreground—at many times during the year—are cars parked along both sides of the road. Windsurfers and the Golden Gate Ferries can be seen in the Corte Madera Channel on the left. Looking west across the channel, the motorist has a view of Mount Tamalpais and its descending ridges, which provide a spectacular backdrop to the horizontal line of urban development in the middle-ground and water in the foreground.

This view is interrupted by Remillard Park at the official boundary of Larkspur, and urban development intensifies at the Remillard Brick Kiln (office building) and Larkspur Landing Shopping Center on the right, with the triangular space frame of the Larkspur Ferry Terminal looming on the left. The motorist continues under the pedestrian bridge that connects the Ferry Terminal with the shopping center, past two major intersections, and under the historic wood trestle of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad (a landmark dating from 1884) before coming to the congested and signalized intersections of the Highway 101 on- and off-ramps.

Once past the intersections and under the freeway, the view of Mount Tam again opens up, but attention must be paid to the lines of traffic converging onto four-lane Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. On the right and above are the houses of Greenbrae. On the left are the offices of Drake's Landing and the Bon Air Shopping Center.

The impression is one of increasing traffic congestion. The driver has gone from the open road of the bridge and its extended off-ramp, past the increasingly dense complexes of the correctional center, Larkspur Landing, and the Ferry Terminal. The view of Mount Tam is memorable, but there is nothing in this driving sequence to either alert the newcomer that Larkspur is ahead, or to tell the driver that he has entered Larkspur, or to advise what is ahead, where to turn to reach the Downtown, what lanes to use to turn or not to turn, *etc.* (All of this could be done with a sequence of well-designed and carefully placed symbols and signs along this route.)

2. From the north (descending from the Southern Heights Ridge southbound on US Highway 101)

After passing the turn-off to Interstate 580 (the Richmond Bridge), Highway 101 southbound from San Rafael bears right and climbs to the top of the Southern Heights Ridge. Highway signs announce "Kentfield/Sir Francis Drake Boulevard" and "Ferry Terminal/Fairfax." There is a small sign, "Larkspur," just over the crest. The driver's view is focused straight ahead. There is some awareness of the steep bank on the right and the trees and houses of Greenbrae above, but little awareness of the Larkspur Landing Shopping Center and office buildings below the freeway on the left. However, Wood Island, capped by its office buildings, does appear prominently in the left foreground just before the motorist must exit to the right onto Sir Francis Drake. Attention must be paid to converging traffic and the major signalized intersection with Eliseo Drive and Barry Way.

During the afternoon and evening peak hours, it is almost impossible to get into the left turn lanes. It may be appropriate to mark visually this intersection as an entrance to Larkspur, and to direct Bon Air Shopping Center traffic to the next intersection at La Cuesta Drive.

3. From the west (southbound on College Avenue from the College of Marin)

Those coming from West Marin, the Upper Ross Valley, and Kentfield and Kent Woodlands enter Larkspur via College Avenue. The City Limits begin at the intersection of College Avenue, Kent Avenue, and Woodland Road. The inter-

section itself is a landmark because of the sharp angle formed by Kent and College Avenues. Those who have come via College Avenue from Sir Francis Drake Boulevard have passed college buildings and parking lots on both sides of the road, and now, at this intersection, there is the softness of a tree grove on the right, and houses on both sides of the street. As College curves to the left and crosses Murray Lane, the street name changes to Magnolia Avenue, both sides of the street are in Larkspur; and both sides change to commercial (a distinct "edge"). Here, at the intersection of Murray Lane and College Court with Magnolia Avenue is another appropriate location to mark the entrance into Larkspur.

4. From the west (eastbound on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard at Bon Air Road)

Heading east on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, after passing Wolfe Grade Drive (marked by a pedestrian bridge from Greenbrae to the Anthony Bacich Elementary School), one sees the homes of unincorporated Greenbrae on the left and the buildings and grounds of Marin Catholic High School on the right, which continue to Bon Air Road. The City Limits of Larkspur begin at the far right corner of the Bon Air intersection. This entry to the City could be marked in some way, even though a right turn at Bon Air Road would keep the driver in unincorporated area. Most appropriate would be signs directing the visitor to turn right to Downtown Larkspur and, for those visitors continuing on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, entrance banners welcoming all to the City. Further south on Bon Air Road, after having curved right and left around Marin General Hospital, the City Limits are entered just before reaching South Eliseo Boulevard. Entrance banners could be placed in this location, between the City Limits and Corte Madera Creek.

5. From the south (northbound on Magnolia Avenue from Tamalpais Drive in Corte Madera)

This most direct route to Larkspur from the south is not signed. From the Tamalpais Drive exit on northbound Highway 101, a left turn at the signalized intersection will take the driver about a half-mile along a straight, wide, and boulevarded four-lane Tamalpais Drive past the Corte Madera Town Center shopping center and the Corte Madera Town Park before the road narrows to two lanes and curves through Corte Madera's small Downtown to Magnolia Avenue. A free right turn allows traffic to Larkspur to turn right onto Corte Madera Avenue northbound without stopping.

Approximately 700 feet (one long block) to the north is the Larkspur City Limit, marked by a small green sign. The street name changes to Magnolia Avenue.

Almost immediately on the right is the LCM School and grounds that continue to Alexander Avenue. Apparent, as the road bends right, are the tall palm trees and intersection of Baltimore Avenue, then the dense tree cover and the entrance to the Lark Creek Inn. These landmarks are on the right, but Dolliver Park, its redwoods, and its play equipment are also prominent on the west side of Magnolia Avenue. From the Lark Creek shops, the blue banners of Downtown are immediately visible, and it is only two blocks from there to City Hall and Downtown.

6. From the south (northbound on US Highway 101 above the old NWPRR right-of-way and just before the Lucky Drive interchange)

After passing between Corte Madera's two regional shopping centers, the northbound motorist passes a quarter-mile of motels, restaurants, and offices on the left and a marsh on the right. The freeway climbs slightly to cross the former NWPRR and the south loop of the Nellen Avenue/Redwood Highway frontage road. At this point the driver has entered Larkspur. The Corte Madera office and commercial strip continues for another quarter-mile on the left. On the right in Larkspur is a mix of trailer parks, service stations, shopping center, and industrial buildings and yards. Highway signs announce "San Anselmo, Richmond Bridge, San Quentin, Ferry," and "Hospital, Fairfax, College of Marin." The 1973 General Plan called this area "a confusing mix of activities." Worse—for the first-time visitor to Larkspur—is the confusion over which exit to take.

There are at least three obvious destinations in Larkspur, and each requires a different route and a split-second decision about where to exit: (1) To the Cost-Plus shopping center—take the first (Lucky Drive) exit. (2) To Larkspur Landing or the Ferry Terminal—take the next exit but bear right. (3) To Larkspur proper or the Bon Air Shopping Center—take this second exit but bear left. Those are the obvious choices, but what about less obvious destinations, such as City Hall, Downtown, or Redwood High School? (As Larkspur citizens know, the better route for those destinations would have been Tamalpais Drive through Corte Madera, but that route to Larkspur isn't signed for the visitor.) Once at the Lucky Drive exit, the route to Downtown is tortuous—turn right (south) on Redwood Highway, go back toward the south (the direction from which you were coming), bear right, cross under the freeway (you're again heading north, but now on Nellen Avenue), turn left at the first intersection (Fifer Avenue—but watch out for cars exiting and entering the freeway), go through the next intersection, turn left—and *voilà!*—there's Redwood High School, but where is its entrance? Turn right on Riviera Circle (but bear left so you don't drive into the Greenbrae Marina), bear left around the High School (there are pleasant

looking homes on the right), and there, on the left, is the entrance road to the High School. The driver left Larkspur at the west frontage road—Nellen Avenue—northbound, and came back into Larkspur at the Redwood High parking lot at Riviera Circle.

By continuing west on Doherty Drive, the motorist will reach the busy T-intersection of Magnolia Avenue and Doherty Drive, where signs advise a left turn to Downtown and City Hall. En route, on the right, the driver passes beautiful and open marsh, Larkspur Creek (not signed), and Piper Park, the police station, and Hall School. On the left were the not-very-well-maintained high school fields, plant nurseries, and the Lucky Shopping Center.

In summary, this is a confusing and unattractive gateway to Larkspur. Residents are no doubt used to the twists and turns. Probably this should be considered only a secondary entrance to Larkspur, but it wouldn't hurt to sign the route with directions to Downtown. □

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Appendix B: Description of Neighborhoods

1. Northwest (north of Bon Air Road, on both sides of Magnolia Ave.).

a. *College Park*—This is a one-street subdivision of 18 homes on the east side of Magnolia Avenue, opposite Murray Lane, and abutting the south side of the College of Marin. The terrain is level. The houses are uniformly “California ranch style” dating from the 1950s or 1960s. The College of Marin and shops on North Magnolia and College Avenues are within easy walking distance of the neighborhood, as are the walking and bicycle paths along Corte Madera Creek and the hospital and medical offices just across the creek.

Parts of the neighborhood (primarily the houses along the east side of College Court) are in the 100-year Flood Zone. Also, these houses do not take advantage of—do not orient to—the College playing fields or the creek to the east. (There is only a small green wetlands between the homes and a College parking lot that was created by filling a former marsh.) Houses on the west side of the street are very close to—and are not buffered from—the noise and traffic on Magnolia Avenue.

b. *Murray Park*—the single-family homes (and two multiple-family apartment units) on the west side of Magnolia from Murray Avenue north to the City Limits (Murray Lane). This neighborhood extends west of the City Limits into unincorporated area.

This is a neighborhood of approximately 100 one- and two-story homes of various sizes dating from 1912 through the 1940s. (Approximately 30 additional homes lie west of the Larkspur City Limits in unincorporated Kent Woodlands.) Some were originally summer homes sited among the redwoods. A creek runs through the area.

The area is quiet. There is no through-traffic. Exit/entry is from North Magnolia Avenue via three streets—Murray, Frances, and Estelle Avenues. The College of Marin and shops on North Magnolia Avenue (and on College Avenue in Kentfield) are within easy walking distance of many Murray Park residences.

Neighborhood problems include landslides that have occurred in the area. Roads are narrow. The moving and storage company on North Magnolia adversely affects the neighborhood as the vans routinely use Murray and Frances Avenue for parking and turning around.

c. *Skylark*—This is a high density multiple-family development dating from 1969, prominent on the eastern slopes of the hill above (west of) Hillview and south of Murray Park. In the lower section, the building module is small—two to three dwelling units per building. Further up the hill, the buildings are larger and more “apartment-like.” There are several common “amenity areas.”

The development is set in and surrounded by groves of trees. It has good potential for access to surrounding open space. However, the building layout produces auto and parking congestion, and parking is the first thing one sees.

d. *Hillview*—the single-family development between Magnolia Avenue and Corte Madera Creek north of Bon Air Road, and abutting the College of Marin Educational/Environmental Resource District on the east. There are approximately 120 single-family homes that remain predominantly one-story, in this 1955 ranch-style subdivision on level terrain along Corte Madera Creek. There is one entrance to the neighborhood off Magnolia at a four-way stop; Golden Gate Transit stops are located there. A linear park along Magnolia Avenue buffers the neighborhood. There is no through-traffic. The park paths lead north a short distance to shops along North Magnolia Avenue and to the College of Marin. All streets are named after universities or colleges.

Front yards are individually landscaped, but generally without fences or hedges. Sidewalks are paved and without borders. The subdivision enjoys good views of Mt. Tam and the surrounding hills. Some homes flank Corte Madera Creek. Parts of the neighborhood (primarily a central zone parallel to Magnolia Avenue) are in the 100-year Flood Zone.

2. Southwest (south of Bon Air Road, west of Magnolia Avenue).

e. *Magnolia Victorians*—approximately 30 homes along the west side of Magnolia Avenue from the Escalle Winery south to the Downtown. Approximately 12 of these homes were built in the late 1890s and early 1900s. Many were converted to rooming houses during World War II.

f. *Cedar-Ajax*—Here—west of Hawthorne Avenue and north of Citron Avenue—are predominantly newer, medium-to-large, single family homes on large lots heavily wooded with oak, bay, madrone, and redwoods. (Power lines running through the heavy tree cover cause frequent power outages during the winter.) Most lots are sloped, and the homes are multi-story. Views of the Ross Valley, San Francisco Bay, Downtown Larkspur, Corte Madera Ridge, Mount Tam, and King Mountain are spectacular. The neighborhood borders on the King Mountain open space area and has a rural feel, yet is close to Downtown. The area is “built-out” in the sense that all lots are built upon, but many houses

LARKSPUR GENERAL PLAN

Figure B-1: Planning Areas and Neighborhoods

Larkspur Neighborhoods

- a.

College Park
- b.

Murray Park
- c.

Skylark
- d.

Hillview
- e.

Magnolia Victorians
- f.

Cedar-Ajax
- g.

Central Homes
- h.

The Loop
- i.

Baltimore (Madrone) Canyon
- j.

Madrone Woodlands
- k.

Chevy Chase
- l.

Greenbrae Marina
- m.

Boardwalk
- n.

Larkspur Plaza
- o.

Creekside
- p.

Downtown
- q.

Baltimore Park
- r.

Palm Hill
- s.

Meadowood
- t.

Heather Gardens
- u.

Greenbrae East
- v.

Greenbrae Boardwalk
- w.

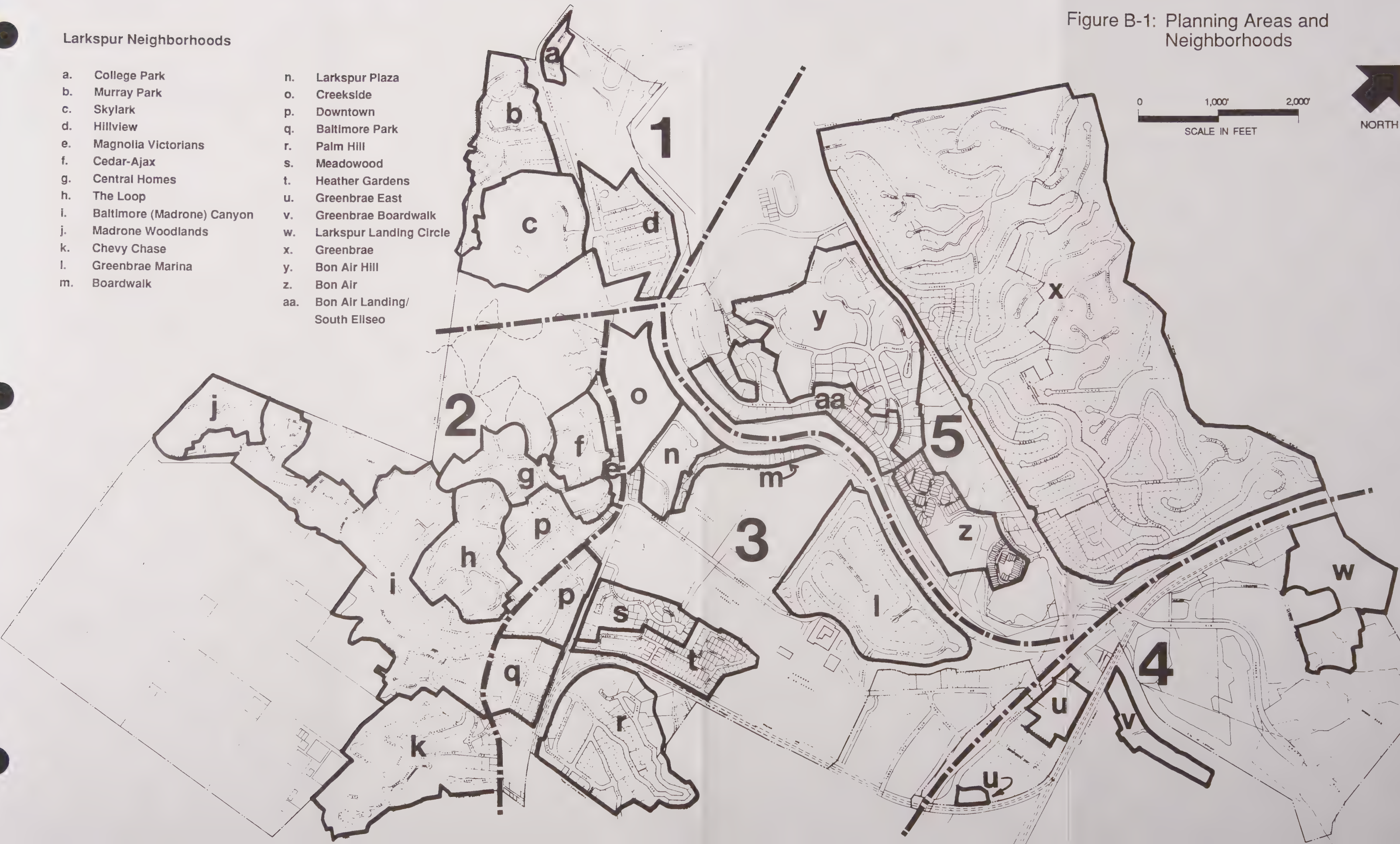
Larkspur Landing Circle
- x.

Greenbrae
- y.

Bon Air Hill
- z.

Bon Air
- aa.

Bon Air Landing/
South Eliseo



are being expanded. There are no through streets, and very little parking space on the streets (but there is ample off-street parking). The streets are built of unreinforced concrete overlaid with a thin layer of asphalt, and are subject to cracking. Also, the narrow, curved streets combined with the lack of sidewalks make walking dangerous.

g. *Central Homes*—the apartments and homes lying immediately west of the “Magnolia Victorians” and Downtown, north of Sycamore and east of Hawthorne Avenue, and as far south as Walnut Avenue. The street system and homes date predominantly from the 1890s through the 1930s. Single-family homes are found on the hillside; they include a number of “California bungalows.” multiple-family buildings occupy some of the flatter parcels. This area has perhaps the largest number of historic and architecturally distinctive homes in Larkspur. Most of the residents below Hawthorne—especially those south of Ward—are within walking distance of Downtown.

h. *The Loop*—southwest of *Central Homes* and includes Walnut, Hazel, Laurel, and Palm Avenues. This neighborhood is situated on a hilltop—the ridge between Downtown and Baltimore Canyon. Its 60–70 homes—modest to very large—were built mostly between 1890 and the 1930s. Lots are steep and heavily wooded with large trees. Views are excellent. The large lot size often allows building additions without blocking views or creating conflicts between neighboring properties. Despite the neighborhood’s hilltop location, Downtown is within easy walking distance.

While there is no through-traffic, the street system is poor. There is no room for parking on the street, and very little room for private off-street parking.

i. *Baltimore (Madrone) Canyon*—the area west of Magnolia Avenue, south of “The Loop” and as far south as Chevy Chase, and including West Baltimore and Piedmont Avenues. This neighborhood is centered on and bisected by Larkspur Creek, along which runs a popular hiking and dog-walking trail. The trail leads west, up the canyon, to large areas of unmanicured open space, much of it owned and maintained by the County and the Marin Municipal Water District. Connections with many trails along the slopes and ridges of Mount Tamalpais lead to neighboring towns—Mill Valley, Kentfield, Ross, and Fairfax.

The area was planned as a summer campground, and its houses come in all sizes and styles. Some were built as vacation homes as long ago as the 1880s. Others were built as late as the 1920s and 1930s, and there are a few new homes as well. Although most are one-story, there are many two-story homes. These homes lie under a magnificent canopy of second-growth redwoods.

In general, lot sizes are small. The small lots and older non-conforming structures raise issues regarding building additions. Lots on the north side of Madrone Avenue tend to be located on upslopes; those on the south side are on flat lots, and Larkspur Creek runs behind them.

Most of the neighborhood traffic—and all of the recreation traffic to Dolliver Park and the hiking trails in Baltimore Canyon—uses Madrone Avenue, which is a *cul-de-sac* almost a mile long. Parking is very limited in most locations. There is very little parking available at the two recreation destinations. The entrances to the neighborhood—at Madrone Avenue, West Baltimore Avenue, and Piedmont Road—are conveniently close to Downtown and schools. Problems for the neighborhood (other than traffic and parking) include trash in the creek; conflicts between hikers, animals, and private property; flooding along the creek; and landslides.

j. *Madrone Woodlands*—the hills at the west end of Madrone Avenue, including Belle Rive Place, Wilson Way, and a few other short streets. This is an area of newer homes dating from 1961 and into the early 1970s on the north side of Baltimore Canyon. Most of these homes are built on very steep sites.

k. *Chevy Chase*—west of Magnolia and south of Piedmont Road and Piedmont Court to the south City Limits, and entered via Park Way, Wiltshire Avenue, and Lark Court. Includes Marina Vista (but not Summit in Corte Madera), which some consider to be part of Christmas Tree Hill. This neighborhood dates from 1937 when a miniature golf course was installed at 55 Magnolia. Narrow—and with two exceptions, winding—streets give the area its charming character. Parking, however, is a problem.

3. South (south of Corte Madera Creek, east of Magnolia Avenue, and west of Highway 101).

l. *Greenbrae Marina*—east of Larkspur Creek and south of Corte Madera Creek to Doherty Drive (and in the area east of Redwood High School, south to the slough that marks the Corte Madera City Limits). This is a neighborhood of approximately 190 single-family one- and two-story homes. It sits in a matrix of open space, water, parks, and the High School.

The neighborhood was built in 1963 around a single loop road with two entrances off Doherty Drive. As a result, the neighborhood is free of through-traffic, but is impacted by Redwood High School parking and speeding on Riviera Circle. Approximately 70 lots located along the outside of the single loop road have direct access to the tidal salt water of Larkspur Creek, Corte Madera

Creek, and Lucky Creek, and thus have direct boating access to the Bay. This type of relationship between houses and large boats is a unique asset shared by only a few developments in the Bay Area. (Public access to the creek is greatly limited, however.) Approximately 95 lots—those on the inside of the loop road—back onto a small enclosed salt water lagoon that is fed from Larkspur Creek. Many homes enjoy views to the water and Piper Park, with Mount Tam as a backdrop.

The rear portions of most lots are partially under water, which forces development to the front of the lot. Normally, larger lots of this size—70 feet wide by 125–170 feet deep—would have more generous setbacks, and the resulting streetscape would look less like a subdivision. Lack of privacy in the front of the house is, however, offset by the water area at the rear.

Major remodelings and additions on some homes have undermined the views and privacy previously enjoyed by neighboring homes. Second stories added above garages have changed the streetscape—the bulky additions seem to loom over the sidewalk. These additions apparently are driven by the prevailing escalation of housing prices, the demand for waterfront homes, and the demand for larger homes.

m. *Boardwalk*—approximately 30 homes along the south side of Corte Madera Creek and a tributary, along the western edges of Hall School and Piper Park. This well-defined, isolated, and historic community consists of small, one-story “arks” along the south side of Corte Madera Creek. Residents enjoy proximity to marsh wildlife, and no vehicular traffic. Known as “Arksville” in 1918, it is the last survivor of four houseboat colonies along Corte Madera Creek in Larkspur. The entire neighborhood lies within the 100-year Flood Zone. Access for emergency vehicles is very limited. The boardwalk requires constant maintenance.

n. *Larkspur Plaza*—west of the Larkspur Boardwalk, from Doherty Drive north to Corte Madera Creek. This neighborhood consists of two-story multiple-family buildings (condominiums) with parking-oriented entrances. The entire development lies within the 100-year Flood Zone. Because the buildings are laid out in a ring along the perimeter of the property, some units cannot take advantage of the views to either the creek or the mountain, and few units can take advantage of both. The buildings also wall off the creek from public view.

o. *Creekside*—a development under construction in 1989, located east of Magnolia Avenue, south of Bon Air Road and Corte Madera Creek, and west of “Larkspur Plaza.” This neighborhood will have 71 single-family units. An adjacent development of 28 multiple-family units of affordable housing is being built

by the Ecumenical Association for Housing. “Use and enjoyment” easements prevent homeowners from enlarging their units.

p. *Downtown*—This neighborhood adjoins both sides of the commercial strip that stretches along Magnolia Avenue from William Avenue on the south to Ward Street on the north. Downtown’s apartments and homes extend to Hawthorne Avenue on the west and the Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way on the east. The commercial part of the downtown extends north to Doherty Avenue, and its commercial buildings date from the late 1800s. It is listed on the California and National Registers of Historic Districts.

q. *Baltimore Park*—This small and level area—between Magnolia and the NWPRR right-of-way, between William and Alexander Avenues—has considerable architectural variety. Several houses (some dating from the early 1900s) and the Alexander Bridge (1927) are historical landmarks. Baltimore Avenue is unique, with its line of very tall palm trees (planted in 1910) and its semi-circular paved entrance to the neighborhood from the east (Holcomb Avenue) that faced the NWPRR passenger station. North of William Avenue, the paved path along the former railroad right-of-way makes it easy for bicyclists and pedestrians to get to Downtown and to the Lucky Shopping Center to the north. A dirt path branches to the east atop the right-of-way parallel to William Avenue to connect to Redwood High School. The path is available to and used by hikers and joggers from all over the Bay Area—although the path does not continue east across the Corte Madera flood control channel. Baltimore Avenue to the west connects to the trails through Baltimore (Madrone) Canyon.

Heavy traffic along Magnolia poses a modest but potential threat to Baltimore Park because cars could divert to Monte Vista or Holcomb Avenues to avoid three or four blocks of Magnolia Avenue. There is a potential for the neighborhood to increase in size and population if development occurs in the small triangle of railroad property at the southeast corner of William and Holcomb Avenues, or on the LCM School site.

r. *Palm Hill*—the area bounded by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way and Holcomb Avenue on the west, the NWPRR and William Avenue on the north, and the Corte Madera City Limits on the south and east. This area opened for development in 1910. Some residents tend to think of Palm Hill as “just the hill”—excluding the flatter areas south of Elm and Bay View Avenues. There is little traffic, and views from the hill are magnificent.

s. *Meadowood*—approximately 75 homes located east of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way and south of the Niven Nursery, and along both

sides of Meadowood Drive and the north sides of William and Chanticleer Avenues. This subdivision was developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s along wide, quiet streets.

t. *Heather Gardens*—approximately 118 homes in the area north of William Avenue, east of “Meadowood,” and south and west of Redwood High School. This is a neighborhood of tract 2-bedroom cottages built in 1942 on what are now considered substandard lots. Most of the homes have been remodeled and expanded to three bedrooms by converting the garage or adding a room in the rear. In the process, the homes have been individualized and are somewhat less uniform in appearance. Younger families are gradually replacing the original owners.

The “younger” residents have infused the “Gardens” with young children, a family orientation, and a new neighborhood spirit. A block party is held annually in Heatherwood Park. Magnolia Avenue shops and bus stops, churches, and all schools are easily accessible by foot, bike, or auto. A dirt path branches to the east atop the right-of-way parallel to William Avenue to connect to Redwood High School. The path is used by hikers and joggers from all over the Bay Area—although the path does not continue east across the Corte Madera flood control channel.

The streets (apart from William Avenue) are narrow. There is no through traffic (although William Avenue regularly endures some traffic from Redwood High School and bypass traffic from Magnolia Avenue during the Fourth of July Parade). The neighborhood is quiet. Parking in the neighborhood is limited. Electric and telephone utilities are above ground and visible. Parts of the neighborhood (primarily “the lower garden”—the eastern portions closest to the High School fields) are in the 100-year Flood Zone. They were badly flooded in 1955, but not in 1982.

4. **East (east of Highway 101).**

This entire area enjoys magnificent views of Mt. Tamalpais and Northridge.

u. *Greenbrae East*—This is the name preferred by residents of the only two mobile home parks in Larkspur—the Golden Gate Trailer Park next to Cost Plus and Marin Travel Trailer Park. They make up the residential portions of this neighborhood on Redwood Highway. Marin Travel Trailer Park has about 250 spaces—90 permanent spaces (no vacancies); 100–120 that are rented by the month (90 are filled); and 50 overnight spaces. Total population in the park is 420. Golden Gate Trailer Park has 64 total spaces of which 20 are permanent, 20 are leased by the week or month, and 24 are overnights. Population in the

park is 25. Both parks enjoy easy access to the marsh and open space adjoining the Bay. They are close to stores and the Larkspur Ferry. They provide affordable housing, much of which is occupied by the elderly.

The trailer parks lie within the 100-year Flood Zone, but the City has installed pumps to drain flood waters from the area. Traffic to and along the freeway and to the surrounding industrial and commercial uses is extremely heavy, and highway noise and fumes are noticeable in the trailer parks.

v. *Greenbrae Boardwalk*—This neighborhood is bordered on the north by Corte Madera Creek, on the west by the NWPRR right-of-way, and on the south by the Corte Madera Marsh Ecological Reserve. It lies in unincorporated area within the Corte Madera Sphere of Influence, but Marin County planning staff has recommended that it be moved to the Larkspur Sphere of Influence. Its only access point from land is from Larkspur, and as with the Larkspur Boardwalk, the homes along it can only be reached by foot from a common parking area. There are approximately 50 homes in this neighborhood. Some arks located here at least as early as 1920. Others were moved to this location from Bon Air in 1946.

w. *Larkspur Landing Circle*—This is an area of multiple-family developments (Lincoln Village I and II, and Larkspur Court) that lie between other (commercial) land uses, including office buildings, a hotel, and a regional-specialty shopping center, north and east of Larkspur Landing Circle. Within each Lincoln Village development, the architecture is uniform, buildings are consistent in scale (two-to three-story), and open space is clustered in manicured courtyards with a great deal of “hardscape.” The walls of the former quarry and the new landscaping leave the area looking somewhat bare. (It will take some time for the landscaping to mature.) Vehicles circulate around the perimeter of the complexes. The resulting feeling is an “open” one, punctuated by buildings and parking lots that dominate the streetscape.

Residents enjoy a variety of services and employment opportunities, excellent transportation (by car, bus, and ferry), southern exposure for buildings and grounds, and spectacular views of the water and mountains. However, Highway 101 isolates the neighborhood from the rest of the community, including libraries and schools. (All children, grades K–12, attend school in San Rafael.)

5. North (north of Corte Madera Creek, west of Highway 101).

x. *Greenbrae*—the entire hill from Sir Francis Drake Boulevard north to the San Rafael City Limits (the top of the Southern Heights Ridge), from Highway

101 west to Manor Road. Roughly the triangular southwestern half of this area is unincorporated. The northeastern half lies within Larkspur. This is an area of single-family ranch houses, the first ones having been built between 1949 and 1952. Houses in the northern part of the neighborhood are located on sloping lots and are predominantly a mix of split-level or two-story.

Greenbrae is easily identified geographically—it is clearly a long hill bounded by a major road below and a prominent ridge line. Major entrances are identified by lighted pillars and signs, and well-planted medians divide the streets, many of which are split-level. The landscaping in the area is mature and gives the neighborhood a measure of seclusion from the everyday hassle of city life. Traffic within Greenbrae is limited to that generated by the residents and service vehicles, since the meandering streets, many of which are *culs-de-sac*, make access to neighboring areas very difficult. The negative aspects of the street system are that the streets are narrow and most do not have sidewalks—which makes pedestrian travel hazardous, especially for children. Further, the street layout is often confusing to visitors.

Other negatives include unstable soils, poor drainage, and—in the older areas—small lots. Here the limited space between houses and proximity of most houses to the street creates a visual wall along the street edge. Finally, community identity in Greenbrae is hampered by its division into incorporated and unincorporated areas. For example, different agencies provide emergency services to the two areas.

y. *Bon Air Hill*—the multiple-family buildings on both sides of the hill on the south side of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, from Marin General Hospital on the west to the Bon Air Shopping Center on the east. On the north side of the hill are three-story multiple-family buildings dating from the 1940s and 1950s. The buildings are imposed on the hillside with minimal landscaping, no sidewalks, and no front setbacks. Two- to three-story multiple-family buildings dating from the 1960s and 1970s line the south side of the hill. From a distance, the light-colored buildings look like long horizontal “dashes” on the darker hill.

The area is oriented entirely to the auto rather than the pedestrian. Vehicular access to individual buildings is awkward. From the streets on the hill, where the setbacks from the street are small, the visual height of the buildings is maximized. There is no public open space.

Many residents are elderly. The median age for the census tract in which Bon Air Hill is located is a *relatively old* 49.1 years compared to 40.1 years for Larkspur as a whole and 35.1 and 36 for the two other Larkspur census tracts.

This census tract has the largest number of older persons (over 60 years old) of any community in Marin County.

The owners of the apartment buildings have maintained rents that appear to be lower than the market rate, and the presumption is that they could charge more but prefer the lower turnover. The buildings on the south side of the hill have good solar orientation and good views.

z. *Bon Air*—two residential developments (Marin Cove and Drake's Landing) located east of Bon Air Hill and South Eliseo Drive, between Corte Madera Creek on the south and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard on the north. The housing developments are part of a larger Master Plan for the entire Bon Air area (which includes the shopping center and offices). The easterly development—Drake's Landing—consists of approximately 42 two-story town houses. The westerly development—Marin Cove—has approximately 129 homes on somewhat larger lots. Residents of both developments enjoy good access to the creek and to Highway 101. Many homes have excellent views across the water to Mount Tam. "Use and enjoyment" easements between the homes in Marin Cove effectively prevent homeowners from enlarging their units.

aa. *Bon Air Landing/South Eliseo*—the multiple-family buildings between Corte Madera Creek on the south and Bon Air Hill on the north, generally along the south side of Eliseo Drive and generally east of Corte Real. Most buildings are three-story blocks with flat roofs, and date from the late 1960s and early 1970s. The units are expensive condominiums with views to Mount Tam, and quick access to bike paths at both ends of South Eliseo Drive. Bon Air Shopping Center is within easy (and flat) walking distance, and the neighborhood also enjoys easy access to Highway 101. (Local drivers use South Eliseo Drive and El Portal as an alternative to Bon Air Drive to get to and from Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.)

Except for two parks between the road and the creek, the buildings along the south side of South Eliseo Drive wall off public view of and access to the creek. Residents in buildings along the south side of the road enjoy private access to the creek.

There is no bike path connecting to Bon Air Road. Yet, many bicyclists—especially children on the way to and from school—ride in the street on South Eliseo. A great deal of traffic is generated by the mix of higher density residential along the eastern two-thirds of South Eliseo and the medical offices along the western third of the street. The medical building traffic is a major concern to the residents, and as traffic on Bon Air Road increases, use of the El Portal cut-through will increase. □

Appendix C: Designating and Acquiring Private Property for Public Benefit

California law requires cities to adopt general plans and further authorizes revisions to these general plans. The general plan is a long range, comprehensive policy statement describing a community's future physical development. The California Supreme Court noted in *Selby Realty Co. v. County of Sacramento* (10 Cal. 3d at 119, 109 Cal. Rptr. at 805, 1973) that such long range planning is—by its nature—tentative, and its adoption is “several leagues short” of an intention to condemn property.¹

When preparing general plans (which have planning periods of ten to 20 years), city and county governments in California are often in the position of designating certain private properties for future public benefit or use, while noting that other private properties (floodways, for example) will not be allowed to be used for any private purpose. Cities and counties have such authority, and *merely designating on a general plan that a private property is to become a future park, for example, does not constitute a public “taking” of private property by “inverse condemnation.”*

Recently—especially in the 1970s and 1980s—the federal and California courts have heard many cases where property owners have sued governments, alleging (in general) that the governmental agencies involved have tried to use (or “take”) private property for public purposes without properly compensating the owners for their alleged permanent or temporary monetary losses. In some cases, the owners have attempted to claim that a government action (generally planning or zoning) removed part or all of the value of their land, and thus the government “took” or “inversely condemned” the property. Naturally, these owners sought to be compensated for what they saw as their loss of actual or potential property value or present or future income from their properties. In the greatest number of these cases, the government prevailed.²

¹ Property owners naturally become concerned when they learn that a government is making plans that will lead to public use of their private property. Governments regularly use their powers of “eminent domain” to openly and directly acquire, and pay fair market value for, privately owned land needed for public improvements, as in the case of highways or sewer plants. However, outright purchase in “fee title” is only one way to acquire the use of land. Cities, counties, and special districts have acquired easements (for road, trail, and open space purposes, for example), and property owners have dedicated land or easements to governments for specific uses under specific terms.

² *Selby Realty Co. v. City of San Buenaventura* (1973) 10 Cal. 3d 110, provided that a general plan depicting future street dedication is not a taking. *Orsetti v. City of Fremont* (1978) 80 Cal. 3d 961, 967, provides that amendment to a general plan designating certain property as open space is not a taking. *Rancho La Costa v. County of San Diego* (1980) 111 Cal. App. 3d 54, held that a declaration of intent to amend the general plan designation from residential to agricultural is not a taking. *Gilliland v. County of Los Angeles* (1981) 126 Cal. App. 3d 610, provided that adoption of a general plan is not a taking. *Guianne v. City and County of San Francisco* (1987) 197 Cal. App. 3d 862, held that mere planning designation is not the equivalent of an announced intent to condemn, and thus not a taking.

This memorandum attempts to explain very briefly, and in lay language, how the land use planning process works in relation to property rights in California, and what constitutes a “taking” of private property by “inverse condemnation.” Inverse condemnation is also known as an “implied taking” of private property for which the owner of subject property pleads entitlement to just compensation for interference with private property rights.

California case law defines the time when an inverse condemnation suit “is ripe” as that point when public action has occurred that is “direct and specific,” such as the adoption of a *resolution of necessity* to proceed with acquiring private property by means of eminent domain (California Code Civil Procedures, Sect. 1245.260). When a city adopts such a resolution, it has six months to file an eminent domain suit. A property owner then has a year to file an inverse condemnation suit. The law is rapidly evolving in this area, however, and it is not clear precisely what public action is direct and specific enough to constitute an implied taking. Nevertheless, *adoption of a land use plan is clearly not enough to constitute an implied taking.*³

³ The following cases are examples of actions that are *not* takings (from *Longtin*, pages 130-131, and 1989 supplement thereto):

- A. Down-zoning from commercial to residential with reduction in value from \$400,000 to \$75,000. *Agins v. City of Tiburon* (1970) 24 Cal. 3d 266.
- B. Down-zoning to residential planned development and open space allowing maximum of five dwellings on five acres. *Dale v. City of Mountain View* (1976) 55 Cal. App. 3d 101, 109.
- C. Down-zoning contiguous parcels allowing one multiple dwelling per five acres on one parcel and four multiple dwellings per acre on the other parcel. Court considered both parcels as a whole, contrary to plaintiff’s allegation of taking on more restrictive parcel only. *American Savings & Loan Assn. v. County of Marin* (9th Cir., 1981) 533 F.2d 364.
- D. Down-zoning from industrial and commercial to general forest leaving a remaining value of less than 25% of former value. *Sierra Terreno v. Tahoe Regional Planning Agency* (1978) 70 Cal. App. 3d 439.
- E. Down-zoning causing reduction in value from \$3,500,000 to \$675,000. *Brown v. City of Fremont* (1977) 75 Cal. App. 3d 141, 146.
- F. Down-zoning from commercial to private/commercial recreation use but still allowing operation of a tennis club with diminution in value from \$1,250,000 to \$250,000. *Friedman v. City of Fairfax* (1978) 81 Cal. App. 3d 667, 675.
- G. Down-zoning from commercial to agricultural but still allowing a single family dwelling on the premises, with diminution in value in amount of \$95,000 and \$75,000 per parcel. *Pan Pacific Properties, Inc. v. County of Santa Cruz* (1978) 81 Cal. App. 3d 244, 253-256.
- H. Down-zoning denying development on beach lands but allowing for compensating densities on adjacent lands. *Aptos Seascape Corporation v. County of Santa Cruz* (1982) 138 Cal. App. 3d 484.
- I. Flood plain zoning allowing very limited agricultural and recreational uses. *Helix Land Co. v. City of San Diego* (1978) 82 Cal. App. 3d 932.
- J. Zoning ordinance change reducing permitted height of future buildings from 300 feet to 40 feet. *Wm. C. Haas and Co. v. City and County of San Francisco* (9th Cir., 1979) 605 F.2d 1117.
- K. General plan and zoning ordinance amendments reclassifying 1500 acres bordering lake from recreation to rural lands, a more restrictive category but which did permit a limited number of single family dwellings. *Lake Nacimiento Ranch Co. v. San Luis Obispo County* (9th Cir., 1987) 841 F.2d 872.

Because any land use designation in a general plan is subject to change through many processes (legislative, E.I.R., public hearing, or inter-agency review, to name a few), private property owners whose land has been designated for public use in a general plan typically have not been successful in inverse condemnation lawsuits.

To prevail in an inverse condemnation lawsuit, a property owner must prove that there was direct and substantial interference with his or her property rights. For instance, such was the case in *Elks Hall Assoc. v. Richmond Redevelopment Agency* (561 F. 2d 1327, 9th Circuit, 1977) where, after adopting a redevelopment plan, the Agency began acquiring and demolishing property in the redevelopment area that included land surrounding plaintiff's property. This resulted in not only preventing the plaintiff from obtaining insurance or loans on his property, but also caused an exodus by those tenants who found out about the scheduled acquisition. These factors resulted in a reduction of rental income to the property owner, and the owner prevailed in this case.

Another successful inverse condemnation lawsuit occurred in *Jones v. People ex rel Department of Transportation* (22 Cal. 3d 144, 148 Cal. Rptr. 640, 1978) that involved a freeway route plan that resulted in the Transportation Department depriving a property owner of the right to subdivide for a housing development by preventing him from gaining the necessary access to local streets.

Of note is the case of *Taper v. City of Long Beach* (129 Cal. App. 3d 590, 181 Cal. Rptr. 169, 1982). There the question of damages for the unreasonable denial to a property owner of the right to develop her property due to publicly disseminated pre-condemnation announcements and activities by the city to acquire the property for a park (in disregard of a prior agreement between the owner and city), excluded any period of delay attributable to proper land use and fiscal planning.

"A California court has finally decided the takings issue in *First English*, the landmark case in which the United States Supreme Court held that landowners may recover damages for temporary takings.⁴ The Supreme Court's 1987 decision set forth this general rule but did not determine whether the ordinance in question effected a taking. The state court has now decided this issue, ruling that the Los Angeles County ordinance in question did not 'take' the Church's property, and thus the Church is not entitled to compensation. *First English Evangelical Lutheran Church v. County of Los Angeles*, 89 Daily Journal D.A.R. 6876 (1989)."

⁴ These three paragraphs are excerpted from McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enersen, *McCutchen Update, Legal Developments of Importance to our Clients*, June 13, 1989.

“The court applied the traditional takings test, pursuant to which a land use measure will effect a taking if it does not substantially advance a legitimate state (public) interest or if it denies an owner economically viable use of his land. The county ordinance was designed to prevent human injury and death, described by the court as the ‘highest possible public interest.’ The court contrasted this interest with lesser public interests such as preventing premature development which had previously been determined to be legitimate public interests in the takings context.”

“The *First English* decision links the determination of viable use to the public interest at stake. If the governmental action protects human lives and health, and there is no use of the property which would not threaten human lives or health, the government could deny a private owner all use of its property. Compensation would only be required for the denial of *all economically viable use* where the land use regulation advances lesser public purposes, such as preserving open space, preventing urbanization, or achieving aesthetic goals. Thus, the economically viable use test as applied in California courts probably will not be based upon any economic determination relating to a particular property, but rather on a balancing of the remaining uses and the strength of the public interest.”

RELATION TO THE LARKSPUR GENERAL PLAN

The Land Use and Circulation map of the Larkspur General Plan designates various parcels for “open space” and for “shoreline/marsh conservation.” These include some privately-owned properties. The Draft General Plan represents the first step in the planning process for determining the location of and the amount of land needed in these two categories. Once the General Plan has been adopted by the City, the City can begin a process, including negotiations with property owners, leading to the trade, purchase, or lease of land or easements or both for the purpose of maintaining the desired open space qualities of the properties so designated. □



- RESIDENTIAL**
- LOW DENSITY up to 5 DU/Ac.
 - MEDIUM DENSITY up to 12 DU/Ac.
 - HIGH DENSITY up to 21 DU/Ac.
 - MOBILE HOME PARK up to 14 DU/Ac.
- COMMERCIAL/ INDUSTRIAL**
- ADMINISTRATIVE & PROFESSIONAL OFFICES
 - RESTRICTED COMMERCIAL
 - COMMERCIAL
 - DOWNTOWN
 - INDUSTRIAL/SERVICE COMMERCIAL
- PUBLIC & GOVERNMENT**
- SCHOOLS
 - PUBLIC FACILITIES
- OPEN SPACE**
- PARKLAND
 - OPEN SPACE (◆ = Private)
 - SHORELINE/MARSH CONSERVATION
 - EDUCATIONAL/ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE AREA
 - WATER
- ROADS**
- FREEWAY
 - MAJOR ARTERIAL
 - SECONDARY ARTERIAL
 - LOCAL STREET

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

This LAND USE and CIRCULATION map is only one of several General Plan diagrams that affect development in Larkspur.

Trails, paths, and bikeways are shown on a separate diagram, Figure 8-2. Other diagrams which should be consulted, including flood zones, seismic hazards, and slope stability, are listed in the Table of Figures at the beginning of the General Plan text. The General Plan text, itself, should be consulted.

This base map was developed in June, 1989, primarily for the General Plan. No claim is made as to the accuracy of this map from an engineering standpoint.

This Land Use and Circulation map is intended for General Planning purposes only, and not for specific site plans or studies. The City of Larkspur is neither responsible nor liable for use of this map beyond its intended purposes.

CITY OF LARKSPUR
COUNTY OF MARIN

ADOPTED BY CITY COUNCIL
Date 12/19/90 Resolution No. 75/90

AMENDED BY CITY COUNCIL

Date	Resolution No.	Date	Resolution No.

J. Vazquez 12-19-90
Planning Director Date
Nancy Anthony 12-19-90
City Clerk Date

0 400 800 1200
SCALE IN FEET

LARKSPUR GENERAL PLAN
LAND USE and CIRCULATION

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